

## Judge wants FBI to explain possibly missing Oklahoma City bombing videotapes

by Dennis Romboy, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, May 11 2011 7:22 p.m. MDT

SALT LAKE CITY — A Salt Lake attorney's dogged pursuit of videotapes associated with the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that he believes the FBI has withheld from the public gained momentum from a federal judge Wednesday.

U.S. District Judge Clark Waddoups ruled Jesse Trentadue raised enough questions that he wants the government to explain why it hasn't searched all possible databases and evidence rooms where the tapes might be stored. He posed a list of questions he wants the FBI to answer by June 30.

"It's crucial that they don't deny they exist, only that 'we can't find them. Trust us,'" Trentadue said after the hearing.

At issue is whether the FBI adequately responded to Trentadue's Freedom of Information Act request for footage of Timothy McVeigh parking a truckload of explosives at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995. Specifically, Trentadue is after Murrah Building surveillance tape and dashcam video from the Oklahoma state trooper who stopped McVeigh 90 minutes after the deadly explosion.

"They can't just say we looked and looked really hard and we can't find it," Trentadue told the judge.

But Department of Justice attorney Kathryn Wyer said the FBI conducted a reasonable search of files where the records were likely to be stored and provided him 30 videotapes and 200 documents. She said he has no evidence that there is more, calling it "mere speculation."

Trentadue contends the FBI acted in bad faith and is concealing videotapes from the bombing, demonstrating a "pattern and practice of deception."

Waddoups appeared troubled by a recent California case in which a judge condemned the FBI records management chief for intentionally misleading the court about the existence of certain government documents. That same manager is involved in the Trentadue case.

"The point is the indexing system has a gap in it," the judge said.

Wyer said there's no indication that the agency has a "nefarious, secret record-keeping system."

Trentadue began looking into the bombing after his brother, Kenneth Trentadue, died at the Oklahoma City Federal Transfer Center in August 1995. Kenneth Trentadue was a convicted bank robber who was taken to the federal prison after violating probation in San Diego in June 1995.

Jesse Trentadue alleges guards mistook his brother for a bombing suspect and beat him to death during an interrogation. The official cause of death was listed as suicide. But when the body was returned to the Trentadue family, it was covered with blood and bruises that Jesse Trentadue contends could have only come from a beating.

The family obtained a \$1 million judgment after a federal judge in Oklahoma found the government intentionally inflicted emotional distress on family members by withholding information about Kenneth Trentadue's death.

Jesse Trentadue believes the government has fought hard to conceal the results of the death investigation because it

might contain a cover-up reaching to the top ranks of the Justice Department.

He also said he believes the surveillance tape could shed light on why his brother was treated as a suspect. He says it will show another suspect at the building that day who bears a striking resemblance to his brother. That man also died in federal custody.

"There's nothing noble about me," Trentadue said. "I just think the American public has a right to know. They kept an ugly secret for 16 years."

E-mail: [romboy@desnews.com](mailto:romboy@desnews.com)