

Nine years later

Ninth anniversary of Oklahoma City bombing still has victims' families searching for conspirators

By Tim Talley
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

McALESTER, Okla. — For Jannie Coverdale, the search for suspects in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that killed her two grandsons and 166 other people did not end with the arrests of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols.

Nine years after the deadly bombing, Coverdale is among a resolute group of survivors and members of victims' families that is still searching for the enigmatic suspect John Doe No. 2 and evidence of a wider bombing conspiracy.

Coverdale and others believe the state murder trial of bombing conspirator Terry Nichols may be their last chance to prove what prosecutors argue is a leap of faith: that unknown others were involved in the plot to bomb the Oklahoma City federal building.

"I want to get to the bottom of it," Coverdale said. "I will never stop asking questions until I get some answers, or until I'm dead."

Earlier this month, Coverdale sent a letter to FBI Director Robert Mueller asking that the investigation into the April 19, 1995, bombing be reopened, citing the bureau's failure to share evidence of possible bombing coconspirators with top bombing investigators. She said she has not received a reply.

"Who's going to investigate the investigators?" she said.

Nichols' defense attorneys have built a case around documents and witness accounts they say show other coconspirators helped McVeigh in the plot to bomb the Oklahoma City federal building and that Nichols was set up to take the blame.

"The evidence that the defense seeks to offer ... provides a viable explanation why these persons are more likely than Mr. Nichols, a man without any history of violence, to have aided McVeigh in his plot," according to a 90-page defense motion that seeks dismissal of the case.

Judge Steven Taylor is scheduled to take testimony on the motion when Nichols' trial resumes Monday, the ninth anniversary of the bombing.

Nichols, 49, was convicted on federal counts of conspiracy and involuntary manslaughter in Denver in 1997. He was sentenced to life in prison for the deaths of eight federal law

enforcement officers in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

In Oklahoma, Nichols faces 161 state counts of first-degree murder for the deaths of the other 160 victims and one victim's fetus. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

V.Z. Lawton, a retired U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development employee who was knocked unconscious in the bombing, said Nichols' state jury will probably hear more evidence of a wider conspiracy than jurors did at his federal trial.

"There's more of it coming out down here than ever came out in Denver," Lawton said.

Lawton and Coverdale are among those who see evidence of a Midwest connection.

The day after the bombing, the FBI released sketches of two men drawn from descriptions provided by employees at a Junction City, Kan., body shop. Authorities said the truck used to deliver the Oklahoma City bomb was rented at the shop.

One sketch, known as John Doe No. 1, resembled McVeigh. The other, John Doe No. 2, depicted a dark-haired, muscular man with features that do not resemble Nichols.

Investigators identified the suspect as an Army private who was at the body shop about the same time and had nothing to do with the bomb plot. But Coverdale and others believe the sketch resembles a man of Middle Eastern descent.

Lawton and 13 other survivors and victims' relatives filed a federal lawsuit in 2002 against Iraq, claiming Iraqi officials provided money and training to McVeigh and Nichols. The lawsuit is pending.

Nichols' defense attorneys allege that dozens of witnesses saw a man resembling John Doe No. 2 in Kansas and Oklahoma in the week before the bombing.

In their motion, Nichols' defense attorneys said they have questioned potential witnesses who can identify other possible suspects, including members of a gang of white supremacists known as the Midwest bank robbers.

They allege federal investigators have impeded their efforts to obtain information about the bank robbery gang and McVeigh's connection with Elohim City, a white supremacist enclave in northeastern Oklahoma.

State prosecutors have repeatedly said defense attorneys have been given all the information provided to them by federal authorities.

"I want to get to the bottom of it. I will never stop asking questions until I get some answers, or until I am dead."

— Jannie Coverdale
grandsons were killed in the bombing

APRIL 19-24

UniDiversity Week

Monday, April 19

4-5 pm Opening Reception
Faculty Club, 11th Floor Rudder Tower
speaker: Dr. James Anderson, the Vice President and Associate Provost for Institutional Assessment and Diversity
International Graduate Student Association

5-7 pm Emperor's Pot - Cultural Simulation
Rudder Tower 401
Sam Houston State University, Students on a Quest for Unity and Diversity

7:30 pm "Mr. & Mrs. Iyer" Movie
Evans Library, room 204 E
India Association and the L.T. Jordan Institute for International Awareness

Tuesday, April 20

9:30-10:30 am The Ugly Truth - Art Display, Movie, & Discussion
Library Annex 410
Human Resources Department

Noon-1 pm Navajo Blues Performance
Rudder Fountain
Mr. Blackhorse Mitchell - Caribbean Student Association

5:30-9pm Allies Advance
With pre-registration only. For further information refer to the web site.

7-8:30 pm Reflections of a Native American Author on Literature and Cultural Integrity
Evans Library, room 204 E
Mr. Blackhorse Mitchell and Caribbean Student Association

Wednesday, April 21

11 am-1 pm A Beautiful Mind: One Man's Struggle with an Invisible Disability - Movie & Discussion
Evans Library, room 204 E
Services for Students with Disabilities

3-5:30 pm Jim in Bold - Movie and Panel Discussion
Library Annex 410
Dr. Patrick Slattery & SAFE (Students and Faculty for Equity in Education)

Thursday, April 22

11:30 am-1 pm The Fairer Sex - Movie and Discussion
Evans Library, room 204 E
Women's Center and Multicultural Services

5-6:30 pm Race, the Power of an Illusion - Movie and Moderated Discussion
Evans Library, room 204 E
Multicultural Services

7 pm The Holocaust Through the Soldier's Eye: A Tale of A Survivor
Rudder Tower 301
TAMU Hill

Friday, April 23

12-1 pm The Experience - International Concert
Rudder Fountain
Aggie International Ambassadors

5:30-7 pm Albatross - Participatory role-playing simulation
Evans Library, room 204 E
International Programs for Students

Saturday, April 24

UniDiversity Celebration
time & venue TBA
International Graduate Student Association

for more information visit
<http://www.tamu.edu/university>

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Thursday, April 29th, GRW 266, 7:30 - 8:30 pm

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Applications are available in the SGA office (Koldus Building, Suite 127) or online at <http://sgadiversity.tamu.edu> and are due no later than 5 p.m. Friday April 23.

Informationals
Monday April 19: 8pm Rudder 502
Tuesday April 20: 5:30pm Rudder 404

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Class of 2006

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Sophomore Survey
begins April 19th

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If you are a member of the Class of 2006, watch your neo email account for the survey link!

To view results of other surveys, go to:
<http://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu>

Student Life Studies
A department in the Division of Student Affairs