

## Trial begins for McVeigh

DENVER (AP) — In a courtroom protected by barricades and armed guards, Oklahoma City bombing defendant Timothy McVeigh gazed intently at potential jurors Monday as they spoke of their willingness to impose the death penalty for the deadliest terrorist attack ever on U.S. soil.

McVeigh, wearing a buzz haircut, an open-collared blue shirt and khakis, smiled and shook his attorney's hand as he was brought into the courtroom from a basement holding cell for the start of jury selection. He nodded and mouthed "good morning" through a grin when the judge introduced him to potential jurors.

But during detailed and excruciatingly slow questioning, McVeigh's stare tightened over his folded hands as prospective jurors discussed how they could recommend execution if he is convicted in the April 19, 1995,

blast that killed 168 people and injured hundreds more.

"It's hard to place yourself in the role of deciding the fate of another human being on these terms," said a middle-aged man identified only as No. 858. "Yet there has to be some ultimate price to pay."

The self-employed financial adviser who once lived in Tulsa, Okla., said he has not formed an opinion about McVeigh but believes there may be other suspects who have not been arrested.

The second prospective juror questioned, a churchgoing grandmother in her 60s, said she cried and prayed for the victims as she watched television coverage of the bombing. Her dominant memory of McVeigh was the footage of him in an orange jail jumpsuit being led out of a county jail in Oklahoma.

"I felt very sorry for him," she said. "For such a young man to waste his life."

McVeigh attorney Stephen Jones then asked: "You didn't feel sorry because they arrested the wrong man?"

"I didn't know," she said.

As the prospective jurors took the stand to talk about everything from their view of the justice system to their opinions on the O.J. Simpson case, they were hidden behind a partial wall from nearly everyone in the audience section of the courtroom.

Given the slow pace — only four potential jurors were questioned by midafternoon — it could take two weeks or more for lawyers to choose 12 jurors and six alternates from a pool of hundreds, and all those picked must be willing to consider the death penalty as punishment.

## Nation/World

From the Associated Press

### Bombs explode in Gaza Strip, injuring Palestinians

JERUSALEM — Two bombs exploded near Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, wounding several Palestinians, police said.

One of the blasts was first thought to have exploded next to a school bus leaving the Jewish settlement of Nezarim, but a Jewish settler leader said the bus had been delayed.

"There was a huge blast," said Nezarim settler leader Shlomo Kostiner. "Luckily, the bus was still in the settlement for technical reasons and a terrible disaster was prevented."

Police said the second blast near the Kfar Darom settlement occurred when a cart loaded with explosives went off near an Israeli bus. A police statement said there were no Israeli casualties but several Palestinians were wounded.

The explosions were the first attacks in Israel since a March 21 suicide bombing killed three Israeli women at a Tel Aviv cafe.

### Clinton lifts Cold War restriction on Chinese ships

WASHINGTON — For the first time since the 1950s, Chinese ships can dock near U.S. military installations with just a day's notice — a result of the Clinton administration lifting a Cold War-era restriction still imposed on the former Soviet republics.

In one of three deals in the past year helping Beijing's main shipping company, the United States quietly agreed to end the requirement that Chinese ships provide four days notification when entering one of a dozen sensitive ports.

In exchange, China agreed to provide new business opportunities it had first promised American shippers in 1993 but had not yet delivered. Officials say implementation of that offer is progressing slowly.

The primary Chinese beneficiary of the deal struck in the spring and summer of 1996 is China Ocean Shipping Co. (COSCO), the state-run shipping company that participated in the negotiations.

### School axes girl's condom-test science project

THERMAL, Calif. — She won the school district science fair trophy for her project on condom reliability — but Shari Lo was disqualified from a regional contest because school officials said she went against their sex-education policy promoting abstinence.

"Because it is on condom reliability, it basically encourages safe sex. Our philosophy is abstinence, not safe sex," said Colleen Gaynes, superintendent of the Coachella Valley Unified School District.

Lo, 15, said at first she was confused — but now she's upset and plans to appeal the decision.

"I'm disappointed that my project was judged scientifically and scored well but didn't score well with some people's opinions," she said.

Ms. Lo bought six brands of condoms, put them through strength, endurance and temperature tests and rated them. No human trials were involved.

## Women train for combat

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. (AP) — The first women to undergo Marine combat training alongside their male comrades threw live grenades and fired big guns Monday on a remote corner of this sprawling base.

"We're getting just as dirty as they are," said Pvt. Jessica Greer of Silver Spring, Md., after firing a grenade launcher.

Camp Lejeune is the home of the Marine Corps' infantry school for the eastern United States. The Corps said the training is designed to prepare non-infantry Marines for port or airport security missions.

"We have to protect our post. It's kind of valuable to know what to do," said Pvt. Rheanna Stebbins, 19, of Las Vegas. She will work as a postal clerk after combat training.

Previously, women in the Marines received only limited combat training as part of boot camp. They are still banned from combat assignments in the Marines, which have had the most restrictive policy on women in combat.

The Army, Air Force and Navy allow women in combat aircraft; the Army and Marines bar women from serving in infantry, artillery and armored units.

On Monday, Greer was learning to fire a hefty Mark 19 40 mm grenade launcher, which takes three people to operate. It spits out fist-sized shells that disintegrate with a shower of shrapnel and a ear-tingling explosion.

"I was kind of nervous at first because it's a big weapon," Greer said. "But after the firing, it's a rush. It feels good."

# Tender Mercies

An exceptional boy meets an untimely end

By Nancy Shulins  
Associated Press

Installment two of three

He was a big boy who walked early, spoke late and never did say much. By the time he was 3, he could piece together intricate puzzles. He was cuddly and round; his parents couldn't keep their hands off him. They considered him their baby, even after two additional miracles, David and Joshua, arrived.

Vincent reveled in fatherhood. He had a gift for it, too, a rare ability to play every part well — teacher, disciplinarian, cuddler and clown; to be a child one minute, a grown man the next. He credits his own father, as well as his years as a youth minister, with teaching him how to empathize with children. He calls it "feeling their hearts."

He helped his boys with their homework and joined in their pillow fights. But he could be strict with them, too, maintaining a level of discipline he'd found lacking in America, where children call grown-ups by their first names and teachers aren't allowed to use straps.

There were other differences. In Jamaica, "I'd never experienced racism. I didn't know I was black until I came here." To prepare his sons, he showed them the prison where Jackie works nights as a nurse, saying, "Prisons are built in the black neighborhood. They are built for you. Over my dead body will you wind up there. I am the law in this house. I will set you right."

Family court convened in the living room. "The last argument we had, Sammy won. 'Yes, Daddy, I'm guilty,' he said. 'But have mercy.'" At that point, the judge turned to mush.

### Life by the Bible

In parenthood as in life, the Grahams' Bible was their guidebook. They don't consider it a book at all, really, but rather the directly inspired word of God. Its timeless principles are the essence of what they have tried to impart to their children: To do right in the eyes of the Lord, to walk the paths of righteousness that lead to eternal reward.

Sammy shared their devotion. At 8, he heard the story of the baptism of Jesus and insisted on being baptized, too. Each Sunday, he'd take his place in the second pew, absorb every word of his father's sermon, then come forward for his blessing. Later, they'd have lengthy discussions. "He was like a little theologian," Jackie says, "always questioning things."

"How many Gods are there?" (A typical Sammy question.)

"One."

"No, Daddy. There are six: The Lord, God, Jesus, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Six."

### Trying to be like Jesus

The more Sammy learned about Jesus, the harder he tried to be like him. He always told the truth, even when it got him in trouble. He practiced turning the other cheek, looking out for the underdog, being brave. When a dog attacked his brothers, Sammy saved them by attacking the dog. But lately, when other kids teased him, he'd had a tough time behaving like Jesus.

As the Grahams tell their story, 10-year-old David and 8-year-old Josh take turns darting into the living room to eavesdrop and wheedle. Can they watch TV now? No, read a book. Can they go outside and play? No, it's pouring. Ask your grandmother a question. Learn something from long ago.

They are bright, active boys, fast-moving as minnows. Sammy was different. He was quiet and slow, an emotional late bloomer who was physically ahead of his peers. "A baby in a grown man's body," Vincent says. And a paradox in other ways, too.

He was logical and precise, gifted not only at puzzles but at music and math. He could dissect complex arguments with lawyerly skill. Yet he liked the same toys as his cousin, an infant. And he was awkward and clumsy; he couldn't even clap. Josh rode a bike before he could.

In the water, his awkwardness vanished. Not in the daytime — he was too ashamed to let anyone see him in his bathing suit. He had to swim in long pants and a shirt. But

at night, it was magic, like shedding his body. In the water at night, he was free.

### Growing differently

He'd grown increasingly self-conscious. "Fifth grade was socially tough. He had been very sensitive, very soft. His tears were close, and he internalized a lot more," Vincent says.

"Puberty came very early. He started to develop little 'breasts.' I told him, 'You are going to grow out of it, Sammy. Look at those shoulders! You are so handsome! Girls will be fighting over you someday.'"

But Sammy didn't care about someday. What mattered to Sammy was now.

Vincent understood. He tried to help Sammy devise a new strategy, since his retaliation attempts always backfired. He suggested counting to 10 and walking away. He appealed to the logical Sammy as opposed to the sensitive one, quoting the Bible to help make his point: "Anger lies in the bosom of a fool." And, "My son, if sinners entice you, consent thou not."

The Grahams also met with his teacher. They took Sammy to school and stayed with him until it started. They encouraged his budding interest in fitness. And they showered him with affection and love.

Though their hearts ached for Sammy, they knew it would pass. In the meantime, his home would be his sanctuary, and their loving guidance would see him through.

Bertha Hunter, the principal at Westwood Heights, thought so, too. She had 850 children to worry about, and she'd been there for less than a year, but she already knew and liked Sammy. His parents were doing everything right. At Westwood, he'd been placed in smaller classes and given a little extra support. Come September, at Parkway, he'd be one of 1,600. It was going to be a big change.

**Editor's Note:** Please see the final installment of "Tender Mercies" in tomorrow's Daily Nebraskan. Missed the first installment? Read it and the rest of Monday's Daily Nebraskan online at <http://www.unl.edu/DailyNeb/>

**Daily Nebraskan**

Questions? Comments? Ask for the appropriate section editor at 472-2588 or e-mail [dn@unlinfo.unl.edu](mailto:dn@unlinfo.unl.edu).

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