

Witness called selfish liar

Fortier admits she could've warned of the Oklahoma City bombing — but didn't.

DENVER (AP) — The woman who testified Timothy McVeigh confessed his plans to blow up the Oklahoma City federal building was portrayed Wednesday as a drug-using liar who changed her story to save her own skin and make a buck.

In a persistent cross-examination of Lori Fortier, McVeigh attorney Stephen Jones sought not only to discredit one of the government's star witnesses but to suggest she shared blame in the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

"If your testimony is accurate, all you had to do to prevent the deaths of 168 people was pick up a telephone?" Jones asked.

"Yes," Fortier responded.

"And you did not do that, did you?"

"No," she whispered.

On Tuesday, she testified that six months before the bombing, McVeigh divulged plans to blow up the building to avenge the deadly government siege at Waco, Texas. She said he even used soup cans to diagram how he

would stack barrels of explosives in the back of a truck for maximum destruction.

In his cross-examination, Jones suggested McVeigh was nothing more than a "Walter Mitty" — someone who merely fantasizes about grand deeds.

The 24-year-old wife of one of McVeigh's Army buddies acknowledged in a soft voice that after the bombing she lied to friends, family and the FBI by saying she didn't think McVeigh was involved.

Through his leading questions, Jones suggested that Fortier and her husband, Michael Fortier, changed their stories after they learned co-defendant Terry Nichols was arrested and they feared they could be next.

And only after she was promised immunity from prosecution did she start saying McVeigh divulged detailed plans for the bombing. Michael Fortier pleaded guilty to lesser charges in exchange for his testimony and could get up to 23 years in prison.

"Mrs. Fortier, would you agree with me that you either made false statements to the Federal Bureau of Investigation ... or you're making false statements to this jury of strangers?" Jones asked.

The question was quickly disallowed.

At Jones' request, Fortier read aloud a news release she and her husband issued shortly after McVeigh's arrest, in which Fortier says that McVeigh was "crucified" by the media and that there's "no way that he was responsible for this crime."

"You were not distancing yourself from Mr. McVeigh, were you?" Jones asked.

"No," Fortier said.

McVeigh, who could get the death penalty if convicted of murder and conspiracy in the April 19, 1995, bombing, stared intently at Fortier, leaning back in his chair with his hands folded in front of him.

Much of the attack on Fortier focused on her acknowledged drug use. She said she smoked pot and used methamphetamines, or speed, since she was a teen-ager, with her drug use accelerating in the weeks before the bombing.

She admitted taking speed in the days prior to some of the most important dates of her testimony, including the days she says McVeigh revealed his bombing plans in the living room of the Fortiers' Kingman, Ariz., trailer.

Nation/World

Deal to end Texas separatist standoff falls apart

FORT DAVIS, Texas — The leader of the holed-up Texas secessionists broke off negotiations just when it seemed a surrender was in sight, a state official said Wednesday as the standoff in the mountains reached its fourth day.

Meanwhile, seven men carrying Republic of Texas membership cards and a variety of weapons were arrested as they apparently headed to Fort Davis to join the armed standoff. And a sheriff said he thought more members of the secessionist group were on their way.

An agreement with the Republic of Texas to end the siege had been drafted Tuesday night, but no final deal was signed. As of midday Wednesday, nothing had been heard from Richard McLaren, leader of the secessionist group.

Netanyahu calls for accelerated peace talks

JERUSALEM — Amid reports of more government plans for construction on land claimed by the Palestinians, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered again Wednesday to speed up Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Netanyahu wants to replace the step-by-step process outlined in 1993 Oslo accords with a one-time summit to address all outstanding issues, including the tinderbox issue of Jerusalem. Palestinians want part of the city as a capital, but Israel does not want to give up any of it.

Herman wins confirmation as labor secretary

WASHINGTON — After four months of political roadblocks and questions about her professional conduct, Alexis Herman won Senate confirmation to be labor secretary Wednesday.

Republicans removed a hold on the nomination after President Clinton agreed to drop plans to issue an executive order telling federal agencies to consider awarding construction contracts to unionized companies.

Iran says German, Danish ambassadors not welcome

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran said Wednesday that German and Danish ambassadors were not welcome back in Tehran and ruled out a quick return of its envoys to Europe in retaliation for European Union sanctions.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Europeans had no moral standing to criticize his country's policies.

"Over the past hundred years, these Europeans were responsible for two world wars that were full of destruction," he said. "And these same gentlemen who passed judgment against us, their countries were the colonizers of tens of countries."

The crisis between Iran and Western European countries was sparked by a German court decision April 10 concluding that Iran's leaders had ordered the killings of four exiled Iranian dissidents in Berlin. All 15 EU nations except Greece withdrew ambassadors from Tehran in protest.

Republicans trying once again to ban flag burning

WASHINGTON — That old 'Don't tread on me' feeling is back on Capitol Hill, where Republicans are hoping the 105th Congress will pass a flag-burning amendment after years of failures.

"This issue strikes at the very heart of what is wrong in America today," amendment supporter Rep. John Shimkus, R-Ill., told the House Judiciary Committee panel on the Constitution. "As a nation, we are losing the ability to declare what is good and what is bad. ... If a government cannot declare what is right and wrong, how can it expect its citizenry to do the same?"

Chelsea Clinton picks Stanford University

WASHINGTON — Ending months of speculation and rumor, Chelsea Clinton chose Stanford University as her next home, putting 3,000 miles between her and the iron gates on Pennsylvania Avenue.

"Planes run out there and phones work out there. E-mail works out there, so we'll be all right," President Clinton sighed.

Kenyatta Bush murder trial begins

OMAHA (AP) — A man accused of helping kill a high school student and later killing himself was described as two different people during opening statements Wednesday in the trial of his friend, Jeremy Sheets.

Prosecutors described Adam Barnett as a man who confessed to his involvement in the 1992 killing of Kenyatta Bush in order to clear his conscience. Defense attorney J. William Gallup said Barnett was a dis-

turbed young man who got caught in a lie and did not know how to get out of it.

"He'd rather be called a killer than a liar," Gallup said of Barnett.

Taped statements made by Barnett to police are expected to be presented as key evidence in the trial.

Barnett, who was supposed to testify against Sheets, committed suicide in the Washington County Jail in Blair Nov. 13.

Sheets, 22, is charged with first-degree murder and use of a knife to commit a felony in Bush's death. The 17-year-old honor student was abducted Sept. 23, 1992, from outside North High School, raped and killed.

Deputy Douglas County Attorney Leigh Ann Retelsdorf said she would present evidence that Sheets and Barnett jumped out of their car and grabbed Bush near the school.

Researchers create mighty mice

NEW YORK (AP) — With a single genetic switch, scientists have created a strain of supermice two to three times more muscular than usual, with big, broad shoulders and massive hips.

The genetically altered giants can't outpace speeding locomotives, or leap much of anything in a single bound. But their creators believe the mice could spur a revolution in the treatment of muscular dystrophy and similar diseases, and perhaps even transform the livestock industry, where bigger muscles would mean more meat.

The supermice were made by Se-Jin Lee, Alexandra McPherron and Ann Lawler, molecular biologists at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore. The researchers created the mice by deleting a single gene that appears to limit muscle growth.

"They do look a little strange," McPherron said. She and her colleagues describe the mice in Thursday's issue of *Nature*, a British scientific journal.

Though they seem stronger than their peers, the supermice are gentle giants. "When I poke them they don't run away as fast as a normal mouse," McPherron said Tuesday. "They don't seem to be bothered by it."

Aside from their musculature, the mice are physically identical to their scrawnier kin.

The Hopkins scientists created the burly beasts by knocking out the gene for a growth factor they discovered. Growth factors are proteins that either stimulate or suppress the growth and division of certain cell types, such as bone or nerve — or muscle.

It turns out the growth factor the Hopkins researchers found, myostatin,

inhibits muscle growth. The researchers found that out as soon as they saw the mice they had bred without the gene.

The result — totally buff. And promising.

Drugs could be developed that block the action of myostatin, for example. Those drugs might counteract some of the muscle wasting that occurs in diseases such as muscular dystrophy and cachexia, a muscular deterioration that accompanies AIDS and some forms of cancer.

There's also the possibility that farmers could breed overdeveloped poultry and cattle, because the re-

searchers have found a corresponding gene in chickens and cows. Not only would those animals produce really impressive cuts of meat, but it would be lean meat because eliminating myostatin affects only muscle. It does not increase fat production.

"We could end up with chickens with two to three times the amount of meat," Lee said.

It's a long road to reaping the benefits of myostatin, however. And a long shot, too.

The researchers still haven't shown that humans and other animals also have the mouse myostatin.



MATT HANEY/DN

Daily Nebraskan

Questions? Comments? Ask for the appropriate section editor at 472-2588 or e-mail dn@unlinfo.unl.edu.

Editor: Doug Kouma	A&E Editor: Jeff Randall
Managing Editor: Paula Lavigne	Photo Director: Scott Bruhn
Assoc. News Editors: Joshua Gillin	Art Director: Aaron Steckelberg
Chad Lorenz	Web Editor: Michelle Collins
Night Editor: Anne Hjersman	Night News Editors:
Opinion Editor: Anthony Nguyen	Bryce Glenn
AP Wire Editor: John Fulwider	Leanne Sorensen
Copy Desk Chief: Julie Sobczyk	Rebecca Stone
Sports Editor: Trevor Parks	Amy Taylor

General Manager: Dan Shattil	Publications Board Chairman: Travis Brandt
Advertising Manager: Amy Struthers	436-7915
Asst. Ad Manager: Cheryl Renner	Professional Adviser: Don Walton
Classified Ad Manager: Tiffany Clifton	473-7301

FAX NUMBER: 472-1761

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling 472-2588. The public has access to the Publications Board.

Subscription price is \$55 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, Neb.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1997 DAILY NEBRASKAN