

Tackett named special prosecutor in Linn car bombing investigation

By STEVE FRIEDMAN
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A special prosecutor has been appointed in Osage County to handle a case involving a Linn woman who escaped serious injury from a car bomb last week.

Cole County Assistant Prosecutor Bill Tackett was appointed to the case last week by Osage County Associate Judge Ralph Voss.

Federal, state and Osage County law enforcement agencies have been gathering information in hopes of charging a suspect with the bombing of a car driven by Loretta A. Williams, 26, on April 7 in Linn.

Tackett said Monday he was meeting with officers from the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco and the state fire marshal's office to review evidence.

"Out of complete fairness to everyone, we want to get as complete a picture as possible on this case before a suspect is charged," Tackett said.

But Tackett said he did think charges against a suspect will be brought soon.

"Right now, we're in a fact gathering position and hopefully we can move out of that quickly into charging the suspect," he said.

Contacted Monday, Osage County Prosecutor Robert Schollmeyer said he asked to be withdrawn from the case because he had represented the Williams family in a divorce proceeding over a year ago.

"I don't want anything to appear that I have a conflict of interest in this case with the family," Schollmeyer said.

Prosecutors in third class counties are allowed to have private practices.

Schollmeyer recommended Tackett to Voss for the appointment.

"Bill is very capable of prosecuting a case like this and I think it's in good hands with him," said Schollmeyer, noting this was the

first time the county has had to use a special prosecutor for a case.

Ms. Williams' 1990 Toyota Corolla exploded just after 6 a.m. on April 7 at the corner of Lincoln and 4th Streets in Linn. Investigators have been trying to determine how the bomb was placed in the car.

While debris showered a 100-foot area from the blast — even the car's hood was blown more than 50 feet away — no serious injury was reported to Ms. Williams.

Bomb fragments have been sent to ATF's Washington headquarters for analysis.

Any suspect in the case could face 10-30 years, or even life in state prison with parole, if convicted of the crime.

There is also a chance that a suspect could face federal charges in the case if federal agencies decide to take over its prosecution, Schollmeyer said.