

People - Susan Hawk
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TV plans for McVeigh execution

Although it's nearly a month away, TV is firming up plans for the next big story, the execution of terrorist mass-murderer **Timothy McVeigh**.

ABC has tried to stake out the moral high ground by telling everybody from the get-go that they won't be anchoring their May 16 execution coverage from Terre Haute, Ind., the site of McVeigh's lethal injection.

Instead, **Charlie Gibson** and "Good Morning America" will air from Oklahoma City, the site of McVeigh's terror strike against the U.S. government that killed 168 people. That means their focus will be on the survivors of the bombing and the relatives of the victims.

It also means that ABC will be focusing on "closure," a concept that TV just loves to talk about.

Meanwhile, newly bearded **Bryant Gumbel** is already planning on anchoring his morning news program, CBS' "Early Show," from the site of the execution.

There's no word yet on NBC's plans. But Fox — the broadcast network, not the news channel — has announced it'll be heading to Oklahoma City for the May 12 episode of its "America's Most Wanted: America Fights Back" true crime show, "to see how the families and friends of the victims are healing."

TV has been hamstrung by the McVeigh story, which began as a telegenic event with the bombing of Oklahoma City's **Alfred P. Murrah** Federal Building on April 19, 1995.

But TV cameras weren't allowed inside McVeigh's Federal Court trial. And, despite attempts to the contrary, the public won't be allowed to see his execution.

CBS' **Ed Bradley** did get an on-camera interview with him after his conviction, but most news coverage still in-

cludes that video of him being paraded in front of the cameras shortly before his arrest nearly six years ago.

Without ready access to video of McVeigh and with a huge pool of relatives and survivors, TV has been telling the victim story now for half a dozen years. And as we count down to McVeigh's execution over the next four weeks, expect loads more of this kind of coverage.

CHANNEL SURFING: Richard

Hatch, Susan Hawk and other stars of the first CBS "Survivor" series will stage a TV reunion next month on NBC's new game show "Weakest Link," at 7:30 p.m. May 10 — a week after the second edition of "Survivor" has its final episode. . . . Weird **Michael Jackson** is trying to get people to take him seriously again with a star-studded Sept. 7 Madison Square Garden concert celebrating his 30th anniversary as a solo act. The concert will be aired later as a TV special. . . . NBC has released its "Today Show" summer concert performers. The series begins April 27 with **Rod Stewart** outside the top morning show's Rockefeller Plaza studio. The series closes with **Sheryl Crow** on Sept. 21.

A 'SOPRANOS' SPOILER: If you want to be surprised by how this season's "Sopranos" turns out, stop reading now.

But abcnews.go.com, ABC's Web site, is reporting that Tony Soprano's nephew, Christopher, won't make it to the fourth season of HBO's mob show. The Web site quotes a "Sopranos" insider for the report of his imminent whacking, which may or may not be true.

And again, you were warned not to read this.

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