



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown
Eastern District of California

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VISALIA MAIL BOMBER ARRESTED IN OKLAHOMA

FRESNO, Calif. — United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown and B. Bernard Ferguson, Postal Inspector in Charge of the Los Angeles Division, announced today that VERNON DALE MUSTIN, 51, of Spiro, Okla., was arrested on a federal criminal complaint charging him with one count of mailing injurious articles and one count of possessing and using a destructive device.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Los Angeles Division, and Visalia Police Department, assisted by the FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Oklahoma Highway Patrol Bomb Squad, and Leflore County (Okla.) Sheriff's Department. U.S. Attorney Sheldon Sperling for the Eastern District of Oklahoma and his office also provided outstanding support and assistance.

According to the complaint, MUSTIN caused a package containing five pipe bombs to be mailed to a business in Visalia, Calif. On September 8, 2009, an employee of the business opened the package; one of the bombs exploded, injuring the employee. He received flash burns and cuts on his right arm, left hand, and face.

The remnants of the packaging led investigators to a remailing service in Roseville, Calif. Subsequent investigation led to MUSTIN in Oklahoma, the brother of the Visalia business owner.

United States Attorney Brown stated, "An innocent business employee in Visalia was injured due to the defendant's callous disregard for the safety of others. The numerous law enforcement agencies are to be commended for their outstanding investigative work."

Postal Inspector in Charge Ferguson stated, "This investigation was afforded the highest priority. Postal Inspectors and our law enforcement partners worked tirelessly to solve this case to ensure the safety of our postal employees and the American public."

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, if convicted of mailing injurious articles, MUSTIN faces a maximum term of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of possessing and using a destructive device carries a mandatory minimum prison term of 30 years. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

MUSTIN is scheduled to appear before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in the Eastern District of Oklahoma on October 15, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. for his initial appearance.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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