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News Release

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Man indicted under the Hobbs Act for carjacking a taxi

Earlier this week, a federal grand jury in Minneapolis indicted a 43-year-old man for allegedly carjacking an Airport Taxi taxicab on January 29, 2011. Antonius Brett El-X, address unknown, was charged under the Hobbs Act with one count of interference with commerce by robbery. He remains in custody.

The indictment alleges that on January 29, El-X, also known as Brett Anthony Anderson, stole the taxi by force. According to a law enforcement affidavit filed in the case, the driver said he was dispatched at 11:00 p.m. to pick up a fare at a hotel in Crystal, Minnesota. Upon the taxi's arrival, El-X requested to sit in the front seat of the cab and use the driver's cell phone, which the driver allowed. Then, as the cab left the hotel, El-X allegedly reached his left leg over the center console, slammed on the brake, and attempted to push the driver out the door. At the same time, El-X purportedly reached toward his right hip, causing the driver to believe he had a gun. As a result, the driver exited the cab, and El-X allegedly drove away. Police responded and, using GPS, tracked the cab, which El-X ultimately crashed. He was subsequently arrested.

The Hobbs Act, passed by Congress in 1946, allows federal prosecutors to prosecute violent habitual criminals who commit armed robbery in places of business involved in interstate commerce. Federal prosecution of these cases is sometimes beneficial since the penalties are often tougher than under state law. Furthermore, because the federal system has no parole, those who receive federal sentences serve virtually the entire time imposed.

If convicted, El-X faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. All sentences will be determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an investigation by the Crystal Police Department and the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Julie E. Allyn.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by a defendant. A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.

