

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cumberland County Man Pleads Guilty to Selling Pipe Bombs

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Cumberland County man pleaded guilty today to selling pipe bombs to an undercover FBI agent, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Walter Ford, 22, of Upper Deerfield, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joseph H. Rodriguez to a one-count Information, which charges unlawful transfer of an explosive bomb. Judge Rodriguez continued the defendant's detention and scheduled sentencing for July 10.

According to a criminal complaint signed on Nov. 27, 2006, Ford and co-defendant Samuel Finlaw, 26, of Upper Deerfield, sold explosive devices to a person who they later learned was an undercover FBI agent.

At his plea hearing, Ford admitted that on May 23, 2006, he and another man sold a total of seven pipe bombs to an undercover agent for \$350. Ford admitted that one of the explosive devices was a pipe bomb made from a Co2 cylinder measuring approximately 9 inches long by 1.25 inches in diameter. The pipe bomb was wrapped in white tape with a fuse sticking out and contained black powder, Ford admitted. Ford admitted that he also sold the undercover agent six smaller pipe bombs made from copper tubing with crimped ends and fuses.

According to the complaint, the undercover agent told Ford that he needed an explosive device to damage a motorcycle clubhouse and kill everyone inside.

On May 25, 2006, Ford and Finlaw were arrested by Special Agents of the FBI, ATF and NJ State Police. The U.S. Attorney's Office adopted the case for federal prosecution. Finlaw pleaded guilty on Feb. 28 to one-count of unlawful transfer of an explosive bomb and is scheduled to be sentenced on July 10.

The charge of unlawful transfer of an explosive bomb carries a statutory maximum prison sentence of 10 years and a fine of \$10,000.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Rodriguez will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI Atlantic City Resident Agency, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Pedro Ruiz, ATF's Atlantic City Satellite Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Mark Potter, and the N.J. State Police, under the direction of Colonel Rick Fuentes, Superintendent, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Skahill of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Lori Koch, Esq. Assistant Federal Public Defender