



Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

Arraignment in United States v. Roberto Cepeda

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian today announced that 46 year old Roberto Cepeda, appeared before United States Magistrate-Judge Andrew T. Baxter and entered a plea of not guilty to a five count indictment charging him with sending anthrax hoax letters to United States District Court Clerk's offices in Syracuse, New York, Washington, D.C., and Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, and Alexandria Virginia during April of 2007. The indictment alleges that Cepeda sent the letters from the New York State prison in Auburn, New York where he was serving time in connection with unrelated state crimes¹. The indictment alleges that the letters contained an unknown substance and notes stating "This is ANTHRAX", ANTHRAX for you...", "Die from ANTHRAX", etc. If convicted, Cepeda now faces as much as five years of additional federal prison time for each of the anthrax hoax letters, as well as fines of up to \$250,000, and an additional term of supervised release.

The underlying investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Joint Terrorism Task Force, the New York State Police and the Inspector General's Office for the New York State Department of Correctional Services. The prosecution is now being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Greg West of the United States Attorney's Office in Syracuse New York.

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¹The indictment contains mere accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.