



Department of Justice

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CALIFORNIA MAN INDICTED ON CHARGES OF ATTEMPTING TO CAUSE DAMAGE TO A VESSEL IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces the return by a grand jury of an indictment charging Rick Ehlert (44, of Thousand Oaks, California) with one count of attempting to damage a ship in a way that endangers its safe navigation and two counts of attempting to damage a vessel and a maritime facility. If convicted on all counts, Ehlert faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison.

According to the indictment, on or about November 27, 2010, Ehlert attempted to cause damage to the MS Ryndam, a cruise ship, while it was in international waters, by unlawfully dropping the stern anchor on board the ship. Additionally, Ehlert attempted to destroy or disable a life buoy, an item intended to be used in connection with the operation of a vessel.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Coast Guard. It will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Sara C. Sweeney.