



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill
Middle District of Florida

Tampa

Orlando

Jacksonville

Ocala

Fort Myers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 20, 2011

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

CONTACT: AMY FILJONES

PHONE: (813) 274-6171

FAX: (813) 274-6300

ORLANDO MAN WHO TARGETED SHERIFF'S OFFICE HELICOPTER WITH LASER PLEADS GUILTY

Orlando, Florida - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that Frank Newton Anderson (age 43, of Orlando) pleaded guilty today, before Senior United States District Judge Kendall G. Sharp to a one count Information charging Newton with violating Title 18, United States Code, Section 32(a)(5) and (a)(8); "Interference With Operation of An Aircraft." Newton faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison. His sentencing is set for April 20, 2011 at 9 a.m. before Judge Sharp.

According to the plea agreement, on April 13, 2010, Newton aimed a green laser beam at an Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) Bell helicopter. The OCSO helicopter was on routine patrol when the green laser beam illuminated the cockpit and temporarily blinded the pilot. The helicopter pilot and the flight observer lost temporary sight of the aircraft's instrumentation and the horizon due to the laser beam. After the cockpit of the helicopter was illuminated a second time, the helicopter pilot and flight observer directed ground units to Newton's location. A class 3B laser which emits a green colored, high-intensity beam of laser light was found approximately 100 yards from where Newton was stopped and eventually arrested by OCSO deputies.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Orange County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel W. Eckhart.