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FEDERAL FELON CHARGED WITH ARMED ROBBERY OF PENSACOLA PUBLIX

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA – A federal grand jury returned a three-count indictment on Wednesday, November 18, 2020, charging Nathaniel O. Cox, 29, of Dallas, Texas, with Hobbs Act robbery, brandishing a Kel-Tec SUB-200 rifle during the commission of a crime of violence, and being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, and Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan announced the indictment today.

"I applaud the Escambia County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives for partnering to conduct a swift, seamless and thorough investigation into this violent crime," said U.S. Attorney Keefe. "Cox wasn't able to get far before he was apprehended, and now he will have to answer for his alleged crimes. Let this be a warning to any other individuals who may be thinking of engaging in criminal activities such as this: if you do, you will be caught and prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed by law."

The federal indictment alleges that on October 22, 2020, at approximately 8:35pm, Cox entered the Publix grocery store located at 5998 Mobile Highway in Pensacola. He confronted a store manager and another employee, warning that he was armed and there to rob the store. The charging documents allege Cox then instructed them to take him to the money room. Once inside, it is alleged that Cox brandished his weapon and instructed the two employees along with a third inside the room to gather the money and place it in his backpack. The employees were then ordered to lie on top of each other and to count out loud or otherwise be shot. It is alleged that Cox then fled the Publix with the stolen money.

"It is an honor to partner with our federal brethren in identifying and arresting a violent felon," said Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan. "We applaud the efforts of the U.S. Attorney's Office in their consistent approach in prosecuting these dangerous criminals."

The Escambia County Sheriff's Office was the first to respond to and investigate the crime scene. Working in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Sheriff's Office was able to locate Cox at the Jacksonville International Airport and take him

into custody without incident. Cox currently awaits transport by the United States Marshals Service from Jacksonville to Pensacola in order to answer to the charges.

“Our law enforcement partnerships play such a vital role in fighting violent crime and protecting the public,” said Craig W. Saier, Special Agent in Charge of the ATF Tampa Field Division. “We will continue working jointly with our partners to make our communities safer”.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys David L. Goldberg and Jenna H. Callahan. This case falls within the purview of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, which brings together federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and community leaders to combat violent crime in the community.

If convicted, Cox faces up to 20 years’ imprisonment on the Hobbs Act robbery offense and up to life imprisonment for brandishing a firearm in commission of a crime of violence. Cox was previously convicted of a similar crime in the Middle District of Georgia in 2015.

An indictment is merely an allegation by a grand jury that a defendant has committed a violation of federal criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation’s principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access available public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fln/index.html) website. For more information about the United States Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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