



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois*

*Patrick J. Fitzgerald
United States Attorney*

*Federal Building
219 South Dearborn Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353-5300*

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PRESS CONTACTS:
AUSA Jake Ryan (312)353-7602
AUSA/PIO Randall Samborn (312)353-5318
FBI Media Office Ross Rice (312)829-1199

**FEDERAL TASK FORCE ARRESTS ROCKFORD MAN IN FOILED
PLAN TO SET OFF GRENADES IN ROCKFORD SHOPPING MALL**

CHICAGO – A Rockford, Il., man was arrested and charged with allegedly planning to set off several grenades in garbage cans at a shopping mall in Rockford, about 90 miles west of Chicago, federal authorities announced today. The defendant, **Derrick Shareef**, was arrested Wednesday without incident by agents of the FBI-led Chicago Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) when he met with an undercover agent at a store parking lot in Rockford to trade a set of stereo speakers for four hand grenades and a hand gun. He was charged with one count of attempting to damage or destroy a building by fire or explosion and one count of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction in a complaint filed today in U.S. District Court in Chicago, announced Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

Shareef, 22, of Rockford, was scheduled to have his initial court appearance at 1:00 p.m. today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Maria Valdez in Federal Court in Chicago.

“Once the threat Shareef posed was detected by the Joint Terrorism Task Force, his activities and movements were under constant surveillance and there was no imminent risk to the public,” Mr.

Grant said. “By using an undercover agent, confidential sources and physical surveillance, the JTTF was in position to continuously monitor Shareef’s activities and was prepared to intervene before he could act. This case demonstrates the value of teamwork and the partnership embodied in the JTTF,” he added.

Mr. Fitzgerald said “While these are very serious charges, at no time was the public in any imminent peril as a result of the defendant’s activities.”

Both officials noted the charges allege that Shareef was acting alone.

Shareef allegedly planned to set off grenades at the CherryVale Shopping Mall, near the junction of Interstate 90 and Interstate 39 on the east side of Rockford. The mall, which has approximately 130 retail stores, is owned by CBL & Associates Properties, Inc., based in Chattanooga, Tenn. The mall was among several potential targets that Shareef allegedly discussed during the course of the investigation – the others were primarily local government facilities.

According to an FBI affidavit supporting the complaint, Shareef became acquainted this past September with an individual in Rockford, whom he allegedly told during the course of their acquaintance that he wanted to commit acts of violent jihad against civilians as well as other crimes to obtain funds to further his goals. Unknown to Shareef was that his acquaintance (CS) was cooperating with the FBI. The CS told Shareef that he would introduce him to a friend who was able to obtain weapons. In fact, the CS’s purported friend was an undercover agent.

During the investigation, the CS recorded many conversations with Shareef. On Nov. 29, Shareef mentioned “courthouses, city hall, government places, government facilities,” as potential targets. In a conversation the following day, Shareef and the CS discussed the mall as another potential location. About 6:15 p.m. on Nov. 30, Shareef and the CS went to the CherryVale Mall

while under surveillance. They walked around the mall, discussing the layout and spots where they might set off several grenades simultaneously to create more pandemonium, according to the affidavit.

In a conversation on Dec. 1, Shareef and the CS discussed purchasing hand grenades from the undercover agent, as well as the timing mechanism of the grenades, the charges allege. While driving to the mall a second time in the CS's car, they discussed shaving their body hair and meditating to prepare for an attack. When they arrived at the mall – again under surveillance – Shareef and the CS walked around, allegedly measuring the time it would take to walk from one point in the mall to other points.

On Dec. 2, while driving around Rockford in the CS's car and still under surveillance, Shareef and the CS discussed providing a set of stereo speakers that Shareef owned to the undercover agent in exchange for four grenades and two hand guns, the affidavit states. Later that day, Shareef and the CS each videotaped each other making statements that, according to the complaint, are commonly made by individuals planning attacks on civilians as part of violent jihad.

In a telephone conversation on Monday Dec. 4, Shareef and the undercover agent allegedly agreed to exchange the stereo speakers for the weapons, with the agent confirming that he could deliver four grenades, which he called "pineapples," and a "9," which referred to a 9 millimeter handgun, with delivery set for Wednesday Dec. 6.

Shareef and the CS arrived at a store parking lot on Walton Road in Rockford, where the undercover agent was already waiting, about 12:25 p.m. on Wednesday. After greeting each other, Shareef showed the agent a set of stereo speakers in the trunk of the CS's car and moved them to the trunk of the agent's car. The undercover agent then opened a locked case in the trunk of his car and

showed Shareef four non-functioning grenades, a 9 millimeter handgun and several rounds of non-functioning ammunition. Shareef took the key to the lock box, picked it up and moved the purported weapons to the trunk of the CS's car. At that time, the undercover agent gave a pre-determined signal and JTTF agents surveilling the transaction arrested Shareef without incident.

The Chicago FBI's JTTF is comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies from throughout the Northern District of Illinois, all of whom contributed to the investigation.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jake Ryan and Victoria J. Peters.

If convicted, each charge in the complaint carries a maximum penalty of life in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Note, however, that the Court would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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