

**US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**



**SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA**

**Charles T. Miller, US Attorney**

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# **NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **CLAY COUNTY RESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY FOR HIS ROLE IN ATTEMPTING TO BOMB THE COUNTY SHERIFF**

Charleston, WV – **DONNIE WELCH, 26, of Clay, WV**, pled guilty yesterday before United States District Judge John T. Copenhaver, Jr. to various charges stemming from his involvement in an attempt to bomb the Sheriff of Clay County.

A federal grand jury sitting in Charleston returned a nine-count superseding indictment charging WELCH with multiple federal offenses, including: conspiracy to manufacture and distribute methamphetamine; possession of a bomb, aided and abetted by another person; possession of a bomb in furtherance of a methamphetamine conspiracy; use of a telephone to facilitate a drug conspiracy; providing false statements to federal agents; possession of a firearm while being a user of or addicted to illegal drugs; and perjury.

At his hearing, WELCH pled guilty admitting he and Samuel Todd Murphy, aided and abetted by each other, possessed a bomb intended to kill the Sheriff of Clay County. WELCH also entered a guilty plea to making false statements to a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives investigating the attempted bombing of the Sheriff, and to possessing a firearm while using methamphetamine. Additionally, WELCH admitted he committed perjury when he falsely testified under oath before a federal grand jury in an effort to hide the fact that he and Murphy had conspired to blow up the Sheriff to avoid prosecution.

In an effort to impede the Sheriff of Clay County from aggressively prosecuting methamphetamine cases, WELCH admitted he and Murphy attempted to kill the Sheriff. The duo planned to place a bomb in a pre-determined location and then lure the Sheriff to the bomb site. WELCH and Murphy travelled to a telephone booth where Murphy made an anonymous call to the Sheriff falsely reporting a methamphetamine lab at the location where the bomb was placed. On Sunday, August 7, 2005, before the Sheriff received the message, two men looking for items to recycle found the bomb hidden in a box and set to explode by a pressure switch when opened. The men opened the box and the bomb/device exploded. Other components found at the location, including pipe bombs, were detonated by the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office.

WELCH also admitted he possessed a loaded Smith and Wesson pistol on October 22, 2005, following an automobile accident. At the time he possessed the firearm, WELCH had consumed methamphetamine and marijuana.

WELCH faces up to 30 years in prison when he is sentenced on October 25, 2007.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives conducted the investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Monica K. Schwartz handled the prosecution.

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