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MAN WHO POSSESSED RICIN AND UNREGISTERED FIREARM SILENCERS IN LAS VEGAS HOTEL ROOM SENTENCED TO 3½ YEARS IN PRISON

LAS VEGAS - - The man who unlawfully possessed the deadly toxin, ricin, and two unregistered firearm silencers in his Las Vegas hotel room in April 2008, was sentenced today to 3½ years in prison, three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay a \$7,500 fine, announced Greg Brower, United States Attorney for the District of Nevada.

U.S. District Judge Robert C. Jones imposed the sentence against Roger Von Bergendorff, 57, who pleaded guilty in August to one count of Possession of Biological Toxin and one count of Possession of Unregistered Firearms. Bergendorff also agreed to the forfeiture of a pistol and two unregistered silencers. He was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on April 22, 2008.

According to the court records, on February 14, 2008, Bergendorff, while residing at the Extended Stay America (ESA) Hotel in Las Vegas, knowingly possessed the biological agent and toxin, ricin, for an unjustified purpose. Ricin is a toxin made from the mash that is left over after processing castor beans for oil. The toxic effects of ricin occur because it kills body cells when it is taken into the body. Bergendorff also possessed a .22 caliber Browning pistol with an unregistered silencer attached, as well as a second unregistered silencer. Neither of the silencers were registered to Bergendorff in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record.

On February 14, 2008, Bergendorff contacted emergency medical personnel and advised that he had problems breathing. Bergendorff was subsequently transported to Spring Valley Hospital in Las Vegas, where he was declared to be critically ill and placed on life support. On February 26, 2008, ESA personnel were preparing an inventory of Bergendorff's property in the hotel room when they discovered several weapons. They notified the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), and a subsequent investigation of the hotel room by LVMPD detectives revealed two .25 caliber semi-automatic pistols, a .22 caliber Ruger rifle, and a .22 caliber Browning pistol with a silencer. LVMPD detectives also found in the hotel room an *Anarchist's Cookbook*, a collection of instructions on poisons and other dangerous recipes, including instructions on the preparation of ricin. LVMPD detectives also recovered ricin, castor beans, syringes, and beakers. Subsequent FBI searches of Salt Lake City storage units rented by Bergendorff resulted in the discovery of castor beans, various chemicals used in the production of ricin, a respirator, filters, painter's mask, laboratory glassware, syringes, and a notebook on

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ricin production. On March 7, 2008, tests conducted by the FBI determined that the material recovered from Bergendorff's hotel room in Las Vegas contained 2.9% active ricin. The preparation was characterized as "crude."

On April 16, 2008, Bergendorff was discharged from the hospital in Las Vegas, and was subsequently arrested by investigating agents. Bergendorff has been in custody since the date of his arrest.

The case was investigated by the FBI, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, with assistance from the Nevada Joint Terrorism Task Force, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney J. Gregory Damm.

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