



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Nashville Field Division

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Contact: Special Agent/ PIO Eric Kehn
(615) 565-1252

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COLUMBIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSING BOMB *Case Involved Homemade Bomb Found at Local Jail*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Johnny Lee Amos of Columbia, Tenn., faces up to 10 years in federal prison and up to a \$250,000 fine after pleading guilty to unlawfully possessing a destructive device, to wit a homemade bomb in violation of Title 26 of the U.S. Code, Section 5861(d).

Senior U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Higgins for the Middle Judicial District of Tennessee presided at Amos' May 6 plea, which was announced by U.S. Attorney James K. Vines, Sheriff Enoch George of the Maury County Sheriff's Department and Special Agent in Charge James M. Cavanaugh of the Nashville Field Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Amos' sentencing is scheduled for July 25 in U.S. District Court. There is no parole in the federal prison system.

According to facts introduced at the plea hearing, Amos, 43, was arrested on Aug. 27, 2002, on burglary charges. While being booked into the jail, Amos admitted that he had a bomb inside of a duffle bag with other property. After the device was identified, the jail was evacuated. Amos admitted that he had made the explosive device to trade for some crack cocaine. Further investigation revealed that the device was later found to be packed with ammunition as shrapnel.

"The homemade bomb that Amos possessed ended up in a very unlikely place," Cavanaugh said. "Inmates and officers indeed faced the risk of death simply because Amos had a desire to get high off crack cocaine. The Amos case shows that explosives can be used as a drug dealing tool to barter with just like cash or guns."

The successful resolution of the case is the result of investigative efforts of the Maury County Sheriff's Department and ATF under a violent crime reduction initiative known as Project Safe Neighborhoods, known locally as H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Armed Thugs).

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