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**TWO BURBANK MEN INDICTED ON FEDERAL CHARGES IN CONNECTION
WITH ALLEGED BOMBING OF VAN BELONGING TO ARAB FAMILY IN 2003**

CHICAGO – Two south suburban men were arrested today on federal charges in connection with the alleged bombing of a van in Burbank in 2003, the Justice Department and the United States Attorney's Office announced today. One defendant was charged with violating the civil rights of the owner of the van and her family, all of Arab descent, and the second defendant was charged with lying to investigators. The defendants were charged in separate grand jury indictments that were returned last Thursday and unsealed today following their arrests, announced Brad Schlozman, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division; Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Andrew L. Traver, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

The defendants, **Eric K. Nix**, 26, of Burbank, and **Daniel R. Alba**, 31, also of Burbank, were arrested this morning. Nix was charged with one count of violating the victims' civil rights, specifically interfering with their housing rights by using an explosive. Alba was charged with one count of making false statements to ATF agents.

Defendant Nix has an initial appearance scheduled before Magistrate Judge Levin at 11:00 a.m. today, and defendant Alba is scheduled for his initial appearance before Magistrate Judge Nolan at 3:00 p.m. today. Both defendants will appear in U.S. District Court.

The Nix indictment alleges that on March 21, 2003, Nix detonated a commercial aerial explosive shell inside a van belonging to Victim A, which was parked in front of the residence of Victim A and her family in the 7700 block of South Mayfield in Burbank. Nix allegedly violated the family's civil rights by force and threat of force involving the use of an explosive, and interfered with Victim A and her family, all of whom were of Arab descent, because of their race and national origin and because they occupied the single-family dwelling where the van was parked.

The Alba indictment alleges that four days later, on March 25, 2003, Alba lied to ATF agents investigating the bombing when he said that he did not know who had caused an explosion in the van, when, in fact, he allegedly did know the identity of the individual who caused the explosion.

The explosion, which occurred just days after the beginning of war in Iraq, caused extensive damage to the van.

“During periods of global tension, residents of this country must obey the law and refrain from engaging in hostile action toward any individuals on account of their race or national origin,” Mr. Fitzgerald said. “We are committed to protecting the civil rights of all people by prosecuting anyone who breaks the law by depriving others of their right to live free from harassment and violence.”

If convicted, Nix faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years and a maximum fine of \$250,000. Alba, if convicted, faces a maximum of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed.

The government is being represented in court by Michael K. Khoury, a trial attorney with the Civil Rights Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Rick Young.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the United States has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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