



Federal Bureau of Investigation Cleveland Division

November 7, 2017

PIPE BOMB SUSPECT CHARGED FEDERALLY

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Ohio, Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Akron Police Department (APD), and the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), announce Elijah Blankenship has been federally charged with transporting explosive materials, a violation of Title 18, Section 842(a)(3). Blankenship will have an initial appearance in U.S. Magistrate Kathleen Burke's courtroom today at 10am.

In the early evening of August 16, 2017, Akron Police officers began speaking with Elijah Blankenship in the area of Druid Walk, Akron, Ohio. Through the discussion with Blankenship it was determined that Blankenship possessed a folding knife in his waistband. An Ohio State Highway Patrol K-9 Officer and his partner approached the scene and alerted to Blankenship's vehicle. Two packages of unknown powder substances, gunpowder and a pipe bomb were discovered during the probable cause search of the vehicle. Blankenship was placed in custody by law enforcement.

All items were collected for laboratory analysis and evidence. The disassembly of the suspected pipe bomb and pyrotechnic aerial shell revealed PVC components containing metal screws, nuts, and bolts as well as an unknown powder. A test burn was conducted of the unknown powder. The powder burned in a manner consistent with an energetic pyrotechnic powder.

Today, November 7, 2017, Elijah Blankenship was charged in federal court with possession of an explosive device without a license.

Stephen Anthony, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation said, "Officers on scene are commended for their swift and thorough response to the dangerous situation they encountered. The FBI will continue to work collaboratively with local, state and federal agencies in order to ensure our community and our citizens are kept safe."

“Law enforcement did an outstanding job identifying this defendant and finding the explosive he possessed,” U.S. Attorney Justin E. Herdman said. “Collaborative efforts such as this are crucial to keeping our nation and community safe.”

“Our officers did a great job being vigilant and proactive in stopping Elijah Blankenship. We are and will continue to work with our federal partners to bring this case to justice,” said Chief Kenneth Ball, Akron Police Department.

“ATF maintains a wealth of expertise in the areas of firearms and explosives,” said Trevor Velinor, Special Agent in Charge of ATF’s Columbus Field Division. “This case would not have been possible without the continued professionalism of our partners in the Akron Police Department and the Summit County Bomb Squad. We are committed to working with them and all of our law enforcement partners and to use our expertise to remove the most violent criminals from our streets.”

A complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The investigation is ongoing, therefore information, other than the unsealed complaint, cannot be provided.

Any questions regarding this news release can be directed to SA Vicki D Anderson at the Cleveland Office of the FBI, 216-522-1400 or Vicki.Anderson@ic.fbi.gov.