



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Charles M. Oberly, III
District of Delaware

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CONTACT: EDWARD J. MCANDREW
PHONE: (302) 723-1854

NEW YORK MAN CONVICTED OF TERRORISM HOAX

Paul D. Meyer, age 54 of Chester, New York, was convicted today by a federal jury in Newark, New Jersey of committing a terrorism hoax. Charles M. Oberly, III, United States Attorney for the District of Delaware, made the announcement following the return of the jury's verdict. The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Delaware handled the prosecution following the recusal of the United States Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey.

According to evidence presented at trial, in February 2010, Meyer mailed an envelope containing a white powdery substance to the offices of The Star Ledger newspaper, in Newark, New Jersey. At the time of the incident, Meyer had been employed as a commercial driver for The Star Ledger for over 15 years. His job involved delivering daily editions of the newspaper to distribution outlets throughout North Jersey. In the fall of 2009, Meyer was temporarily suspended for job performance reasons. In early February 2010, Meyer's supervisor, Anthony Paglia, sent Meyer a letter requesting that Meyer mail back completed Department of Transportation time logs detailing the hours he had worked in January and February 2010. The Star Ledger is required to maintain such logs. Enclosed with Paglia's letter to Meyer was a business reply envelope addressed to Paglia's attention at the Star Ledger's Newark office.

On February 16, 2010, Star Ledger Circulation Director Dennis Carletta received a voicemail message at his Newark office from Meyer. In the message, Meyer listed a number of grievances he had with Paglia and with Star Ledger management. Meyer also stated that "it was time to retaliate against Anthony Paglia." On February 17, 2010, Paglia was in his Star Ledger office when he opened the business reply envelope containing powder that Meyer had mailed from New York.

Federal agents and members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force responded to The Star Ledger office. An inspector with the United States Postal Inspection's Dangerous Mail Investigation Unit conducted a field analysis of the powdery substance and the area inside the Star Ledger office in which the letter had been opened. The preliminary testing indicated that the substance was protein powder.

On February 19, 2010, Meyer was arrested at his Chester, New York residence by members of the Newark and New York-based Joint Terrorism Task Force. The FBI's JTTF HAZMAT team identified and secured for seizure an unmarked canister of powder recovered from the residence. Subsequent testing confirmed that the powder did not contain biological agents or toxins.

During a post-arrest interview, Meyer stated that he wanted to scare his boss, Anthony Paglia, by sending him the envelope with powder in it. Meyer also told an agent he wanted Paglia to think the powder was "cocaine or anthrax." Meyer added, though, that he simply meant it as a joke.

Following the return of the jury's verdict, United States Attorney Charles M. Oberly, III stated, "Because they have their roots in the Anthrax mailings that plagued this country, and this region in particular, soon after 9/11, terrorism hoaxes are very serious crimes. They are intended to inspire fear and panic in the public. They require a tremendous response from law enforcement agencies that must take every one of these events seriously. It was, in part, because of these powder letter hoaxes that Congress enacted the Stop Terrorist and Military Hoaxes Act of 2004. We are gratified that the jury found Mr. Meyer to have violated this federal law."

David Velazquez, Assistant Special in Charge of the FBI's Newark Field Office, stated: "Tremendous resources are devoted to the fight against terrorism by the various agencies of the Joint Terrorism Task Force. The fight against terrorism is real and there is no time to waste on frivolous activity, information, or hoaxes. Today's conviction is proof that those advancing such hoaxes will be held accountable."

"Paul Meyer's conviction should serve as a warning to those who intend to misuse the U.S. Mails for this type of criminal activity," said Acting Inspector in Charge Thomas Boyle, Newark Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. "The Postal Inspectors, Special Agents of the FBI, state and local investigators and the U.S. Attorney's Office involved in the investigation deserve praise for the effort and dedication it took to bring Meyer to justice. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service remains vigilant, pursuing criminals like Meyer to ensure the public's trust in a safe and secure mail system."

Meyer will be sentenced by United States District Judge William H. Walls on June 20, 2011. He faces a maximum sentence of five years of imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine and three years of supervised release following any prison term.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Joint Terrorism Task Force, which includes the United States Postal Inspection Service's Dangerous Mail Investigation Unit, located in Newark, New Jersey and New York. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Edward J. McAndrew.
