



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**LAGUERRE PAYEN SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON FOR PLOTTING TO BOMB BRONX
SYNAGOGUES AND SHOOT DOWN U.S. MILITARY PLANES**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that LAGUERRE PAYEN was sentenced today to 25 years in prison for plotting to bomb synagogues in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, New York, and to use Stinger surface-to-air guided missiles to shoot down military planes located at the New York Air National Guard Base at Stewart Airport in Newburgh, New York. PAYEN was convicted along with his three co-defendants JAMES CROMITIE, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS in October 2010 after a two-month jury trial. United States District Judge COLLEEN McMAHON, presided over the trial and imposed today's sentence.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "Laguerre Payen was a willing participant in a plot to use bombs and missiles to target New York synagogues and U.S. military planes. Although these weapons were fake, the defendant believed they were real, and today's sentence underscores the gravity of these crimes."

According to the evidence presented at trial and other documents and proceedings in this case:

In June 2008, an informant working with the FBI was approached by CROMITIE, in Newburgh, New York. CROMITIE explained to the informant that his parents had lived in Afghanistan and that he was upset about the war there. CROMITIE expressed interest in returning to Afghanistan and said that if he were to die a martyr, he would go to "paradise." He also expressed an interest in doing "something to America."

The following month, CROMITIE and the informant discussed Jaish-e-Mohammed, a Pakistan-based designated foreign terrorist organization, with which the informant claimed to be involved. CROMITIE stated that he would be interested in joining the organization to "do jihad."

During further meetings with the informant, CROMITIE, PAYEN, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS discussed their desire to attack certain targets in New York, including synagogues in the Bronx and military aircraft located at the Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York. CROMITIE asked the informant to supply surface-to-air guided missiles and explosives for the planned operations. The informant responded that he could provide CROMITIE with C-4 plastic explosives.

After CROMITIE, PAYEN, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS selected the synagogues they intended to target and conducted surveillance of military planes at the Air National Guard Base, CROMITIE, PAYEN, and DAVID WILLIAMS drove with the informant toward Stamford, Connecticut, to obtain what the defendants believed would be a surface-to-air guided missile system and three improvised explosive devices ("IEDs") containing C-4 plastic explosive material. The informant provided the defendants with a Stinger surface-to-air guided missile provided by the FBI that was not capable of being fired, telling the defendants that he had obtained it from Jaish-e-Mohammed. The informant also provided three IEDs that each contained over 30 pounds of inert C-4 plastic explosives, again telling the defendants that he had obtained them from Jaish-e-Mohammed. CROMITIE, PAYEN, and DAVID WILLIAMS transported these weapons back to Newburgh on May 6, 2009.

Two days later, CROMITIE, PAYEN, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS met to inspect the "missile system" and the "explosive devices" and to further discuss the logistics of the operation. On May 13, 2009, they returned to Stamford, Connecticut, and picked up another Stinger missile. Law enforcement officers arrested the four men on May 20, 2009, right after they planted the IEDs outside of two synagogues in Riverdale.

PAYEN, CROMITIE, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS were each found guilty by a jury of one count of conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction within the United States, three counts of attempting to use weapons of mass destruction within the United States, one count of conspiracy to acquire and use anti-aircraft missiles, one count of attempting to acquire and use anti-aircraft missiles, and one count of conspiracy to kill officers and employees of the United States. CROMITIE and DAVID WILLIAMS were also found guilty by a jury of one count of attempting to kill officers and employees of the United States.

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In addition to the prison term, Judge McMAHON sentenced, PAYEN, of Newburgh, New York, to five years of supervised release and ordered him to pay a \$700 special assessment fee.

CROMITIE, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS, were sentenced to 25 years in prison on June 29, 2011.

Mr. BHARARA praised the FBI's New York Joint Terrorism Task Force -- which principally consists of agents of the FBI and detectives of the New York City Police Department -- the New York State Police, and the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations for their extraordinary work in the investigation of this case. He also thanked the National Security Division of the U.S. Department of Justice for its assistance in the case.

This case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys DAVID RASKIN, JASON P.W. HALPERIN, and ADAM HICKEY are in charge of the prosecution.

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