

FBI accuses Ohio man of terror plot to attack US Capitol

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The FBI is accusing Christopher Cornell, a 20-year-old man from a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio, of planning to set off bombs near the US Capitol building and then shoot people as they fled. He was arrested after he purchased two M-15 semi-automatic rifles and 600 rounds of ammunition at a gun shop. The alleged plot was developed through a sting operation set up by the federal agency.

Cornell has been charged with one count of attempted killing of a US government official and possession of a firearm in furtherance of attempted crime of violence. The FBI admitted that Cornell never represented a real threat to the public since the young man had been working with an undercover government informant for several months before his arrest.

In court documents released on Wednesday, the FBI accused Cornell of setting up a Twitter account in the summer of 2014 under the alias of Raheel Mahrus Ubaydah. Under this pseudonym he allegedly sent out statements, videos and other material that indicated support for the Islamic States in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The government's affidavit states that a "confidential human source," who was cooperating with the FBI as part of a deal to receive leniency in a separate criminal case, notified the agency of Cornell's pseudonymous Twitter account. The informant made contact with Cornell in August of last year via Twitter, and the two allegedly began plotting together online.

The government's affidavit does not indicate what role the undercover informant played in encouraging or facilitating the plot.

Speaking to ABC News, Cornell's father, John Cornell, Sr., expressed his disbelief over the arrest and denied that his son could have thought up or carried out such a plot on his own. "He told me he had went to a mosque and now I know, in hindsight I know, he was

meeting with an FBI agent," he said. "And they were taking him somewhere, and they were filling his head with a lot of this garbage."

"I know my son probably better than anyone," Cornell, Sr. told ABC News. "He's a mommy's boy. His best friend is his cat Mikey. He still calls his mother 'Mommy.' Just a typical kid."

John Cornell, Sr. insisted that his son did not even have enough money in his bank account to finance the alleged plot. "These guns cost almost \$2,000. Where did that money come from? Well, it came from the FBI. They set him up."

The government claims that Cornell began collaborating with a government informant late last year, communicating multiple times via instant message online and meeting in person on two separate occasions in October and November of last year.

At their first meeting, Cornell allegedly again confessed his sympathy for ISIS and then showed the informant instructions for constructing a bomb and jihadist videos on his personal computer.

At their second meeting, he purportedly told the government informant that he considered the members of Congress to be enemies and that they should attack the US Capitol building in Washington, D.C., with pipe bombs and automatic rifles.

Cornell is also accused of sending online messages in which he claimed to have been in contact with persons outside the United States, and that he wanted to carry out an attack in the United States to support ISIS. He purportedly told the informant, "we already got a thumbs up from the Brothers over there and Anwar al Awlaki before his martyrdom and many others."

Awlaki was a Muslim cleric and US citizen who was assassinated in Yemen in 2011 by a drone strike ordered by President Barack Obama. Though Awlaki

had been allegedly tied to a number of plots and attacks in recent years, charges were never brought against him before his extrajudicial murder.

Since the attacks on September 11, 2001, the FBI has deployed undercover agents and informants to encourage the development of terrorist plots as a means of justifying the so-called war on terror domestically and abroad.

Numerous individuals have been entrapped through sting operations supposedly involving deadly plots that never would have existed without the FBI's role as instigator, organizer and financier. The hapless targets of these sting operations are then arrested and portrayed in the media as a deadly threat to the public. In virtually every alleged terrorist plot prosecuted by the US government, the accused have had no prior history of terrorist activity and lacked the means for carrying out any attack until they were supplied by government agents, at which point they were arrested.

These methods of secret police provocation and entrapment were begun under the Bush administration in an attempt to terrorize the American public into accepting aggressive war abroad and police state repression at home. They have continued unabated under Obama.

In September of last year, Mufid Elfghie, a grocery store owner in Rochester, New York, was arrested and charged with providing "material support" to ISIS and plotting to attack American soldiers after he purchased firearms and silencers from an FBI source. The FBI deployed undercover agents posing as Islamist militants to convince Elfghie to provide money for their travel costs to the Middle East.

In May 2012, five alleged anarchists were arrested for plotting to blow up a bridge in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was revealed that they had been provided fake explosives and encouraged to use them by undercover FBI agents in a six-month-long sting.

The arrest and charges against Cornell come against the backdrop of an ongoing military intervention by the United States and its imperialist allies in Iraq and Syria. This latest incident will certainly be used as part of a campaign to justify a further escalation of these military operations. The Obama administration and Congress have been in discussion on the passage of an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) that would legally authorize continuing airstrikes

against ISIS in Iraq and Syria and open the way for an expansion of ground operations that are aimed ultimately at the ouster of Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad and the assertion of US hegemony over the entire oil-rich Middle East.



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