



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**THREE MEN EACH 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 JAMES CROMITIE, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS, were each 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. The defendants were convicted in October 2010 after a two-month jury trial. United States District Judge COLLEEN McMAHON, presided over the trial and imposed today's sentences.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "James Cromitie, David Williams, and Onta Williams voluntarily agreed to target synagogues and military planes using what they thought were real bombs and missiles. As reflected in the sentences imposed by Judge McMahan, these were extremely serious crimes that targeted New York and its citizens. Today's sentences ensure that the defendants will be punished for their actions."

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, DAVID WILLIAMS, ONTA WILLIAMS, and a fourth defendant, LAGUERRE PAYEN, 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, DAVID WILLIAMS, ONTA WILLIAMS, and PAYEN selected the synagogues they intended to target and conducted surveillance of military planes at the Air National Guard Base, CROMITIE, DAVID WILLIAMS, and PAYEN 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, DAVID WILLIAMS, and PAYEN transported these weapons back to Newburgh.

Two days later, CROMITIE, DAVID WILLIAMS, ONTA WILLIAMS, and PAYEN met to inspect the "missile system" and the "explosive devices" and to further discuss the logistics of the operation. Law enforcement officers arrested the four men on May 20, 2009, as they took active steps to carry out the operation.

CROMITIE, DAVID WILLIAMS, and ONTA WILLIAMS, were each found guilty 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 of one count of attempting to kill officers and employees of the United States.

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In addition to the prison terms, CROMITIE, 45, DAVID WILLIAMS, 30, and ONTA WILLIAMS, 35, all of Newburgh, New York, were each sentenced by Judge McMAHON to five years of supervised

release. CROMITIE and DAVID WILLIAMS were each ordered to pay an \$800 special assessment. ONTA WILLIAMS was ordered to pay a \$700 special assesment.

LAGUERRE PAYEN was also convicted in October 2010 after the jury trial. He will be sentenced at a later date.

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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