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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, December 17, 2021

Queens Man Who Wanted to Attack Times Square Pleads Guilty to Receiving Firearm with Obliterated Serial Number

Defendant Had Expressed a Desire to Purchase Firearms for Use in a Mass-Casualty Attack

Ashiqul Alam pleaded guilty today to knowingly receiving a firearm with an obliterated serial number in Brooklyn, New York. The proceeding was held before United States Magistrate Judge Robert M. Levy. When sentenced, Alam faces 60 months' imprisonment pursuant to the terms of his plea agreement with the government. As part of his plea agreement, Alam, a citizen of Bangladesh, agreed to the entry of an order of removal so he will be deported after completing his sentence.

Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Michael J. Driscoll, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI); and Dermot F. Shea, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD), announced the guilty plea.

"With today's guilty plea, Alam has admitted to purchasing a firearm for use in a full-scale, mass-casualty attack in Times Square," stated United States Attorney Peace. "Protecting our national security and the residents of this city, state and nation from the threat of terrorist attacks at home or abroad continues to be one of the highest priorities of this Office and its law enforcement partners."

As set forth in court filings, between August 2018 and the June 2019, Alam repeatedly expressed a desire to purchase firearms for use in a mass-casualty attack. Alam identified two targets, either Times Square or Washington, D.C., in order to kill a senior government official. In January 2019, Alam conducted several reconnaissance trips to Times Square, using his cellular telephone to make a video recording of the area as he searched for potential targets.

Alam conducted research about firearms on the internet and discussed purchasing firearms with an undercover law enforcement officer ("UC-1"). In March 2019, Alam told UC-1 that he would be interested in buying a Glock 9mm pistol. UC-1 introduced Alam to an "associate," who offered to help Alam procure two illegal Glock G19 pistols. In April 2019, Alam underwent Lasik eye surgery, a procedure whose value he explained: "Let's say we are in an attack, right, say that my glasses fall off. What if I accidentally shoot you? You know what I mean. Imagine what the news channel would call me the 'Looney Tunes Terrorist' or the 'Blind Terrorist.'"

In May 2019, Alam was told by “UC-1” that the firearms he wanted to buy would have obliterated serial numbers, and he replied “Oh, that’s good man.” On June 6, 2019, Alam met the individual he believed was going to sell him firearms and was shown two Glock 19 semiautomatic pistols with obliterated serial numbers. Alam provided \$400 towards the purchase of the two pistols and asked whether the Glock 19 pistol he had just purchased was compatible with a silencer. Alam was arrested shortly thereafter.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s National Security & Cybercrime Section. Assistant United States Attorneys David K. Kessler and Jonathan E. Algor are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance provided by Trial Attorney Stephanie Sweeten of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

The Defendant:

ASHIQUL ALAM

Age: 25

Queens, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 19-CR-0280 (LDH)

Topic(s):

Firearms Offenses

Counterterrorism

Component(s):

USAO - New York, Eastern

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