

IPT



The United States Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2019

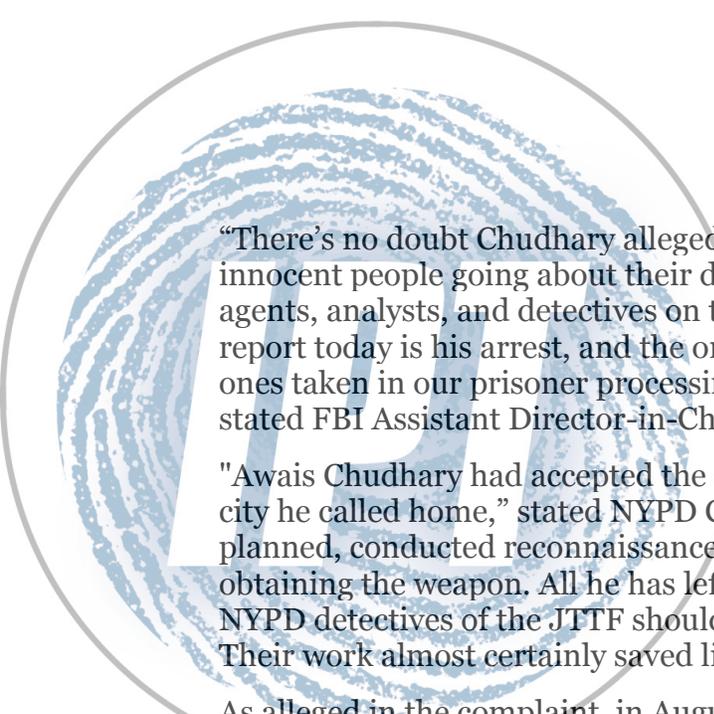
INDIVIDUAL WHO PLANNED ATTACK IN QUEENS CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIS

Awais Chudhary Recorded Videos and Took Photos of the Flushing Bay Promenade And the World's Fair Marina in Preparation for an Attack

WASHINGTON – A criminal complaint filed today in federal court in Brooklyn charged Awais Chudhary, 19, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Pakistan, with attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization. Chudhary was arrested yesterday, and made his initial appearance this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge James Orenstein. Chudhary was ordered held without bail.

“The defendant allegedly planned to conduct a deadly attack in New York on behalf of ISIS,” stated Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. “The National Security Division, working with our partners, will remain vigilant in our efforts to identify, disrupt, and hold accountable those who would conduct a terrorist attack on our soil. I want to thank the agents, analysts, and prosecutors who are responsible for this case and prevented this defendant from carrying out his deadly plans.”

“As alleged, Awais Chudhary planned to kill innocent civilians on behalf of ISIS and record the bloodshed in the hope of inspiring others to commit attacks,” stated United States Attorney Donoghue. “This Office, together with the FBI, the NYPD and all members of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force will continue working tirelessly to identify ISIS sympathizers like the defendant and prevent them from carrying out their murderous intentions.”



“There’s no doubt Chudhary allegedly wanted to make headlines by attacking innocent people going about their daily lives. Thanks to the diligent work of the agents, analysts, and detectives on the FBI New York JTTF, the only thing to report today is his arrest, and the only photos Chudhary will be featured in are the ones taken in our prisoner processing room prior to his arrival in federal prison,” stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Sweeney.

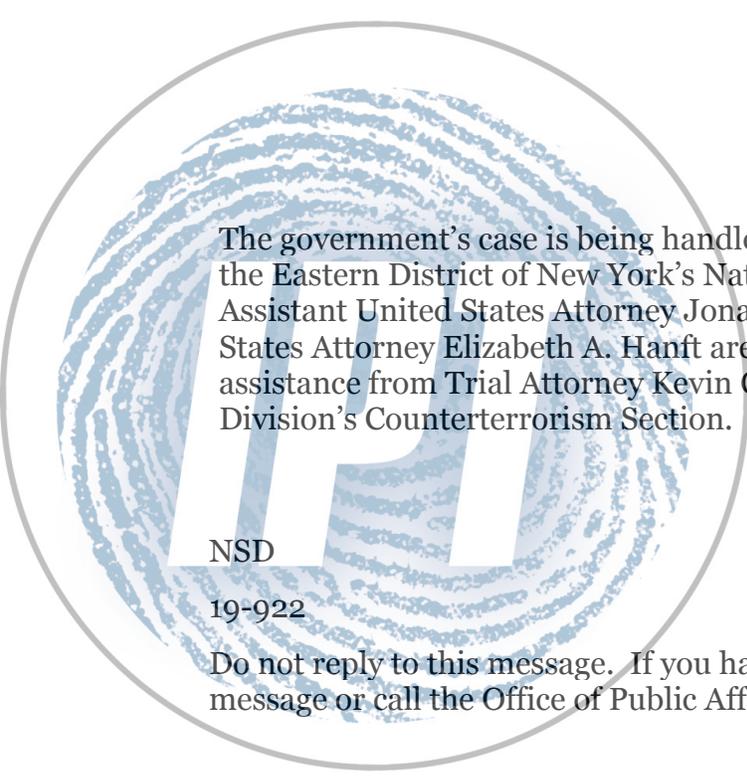
“Awais Chudhary had accepted the call from ISIS to kill fellow New Yorkers in the city he called home,” stated NYPD Commissioner O’Neill. “He had carefully planned, conducted reconnaissance, picked a target, and was in the process of obtaining the weapon. All he has left to do was to strike. The FBI agents and NYPD detectives of the JTTF should be commended for the disruption of this plot. Their work almost certainly saved lives.”

As alleged in the complaint, in August 2019, Chudhary communicated to undercover law enforcement officers through text messaging that he planned to conduct a stabbing or bombing attack on behalf of ISIS. Chudhary also wanted to record his attack to inspire others to commit similar acts of violence. Chudhary identified the pedestrian bridges over the Grand Central Parkway to the Flushing Bay Promenade (the Promenade) and the World’s Fair Marina (the Marina) as locations for the attack. On Aug. 23, 2019, Chudhary told an undercover agent that he intended to use a knife “because that’s what he knows,” but if the undercover agent could instruct him on how to build a bomb, he would consider using an explosive device at a “mini-bridge over a busy road with many cars.” On the same day, Chudhary texted another undercover agent a screenshot of a document entitled, “Islamic State” with the subheadings: “Places to Strike,” “The Ideal Knife” and “Knives to Avoid.” The instructions included a diagram of the human body with directions where to stab a victim. Chudhary also sent the undercover agent videos of pedestrian bridges over the Grand Central Parkway and stated that he was considering throwing explosives over the fencing at vehicles passing below.

Chudhary conducted several reconnaissance trips to the targeted locations. On Aug. 24, 2019, FBI agents surveilled Chudhary enter the Promenade in the vicinity of 27th Avenue and Ditmars Boulevard and take videos and photos with his cellphone of various locations, as well as the Marina, a nearby gas station, a donut shop and a security camera near the donut shop.

Between Aug. 25 and Aug. 26, 2019, Chudhary ordered online a tactical knife, a mask, gloves, and a cellphone chest and head strap to facilitate his recording of the attack. Chudhary was arrested yesterday as he attempted to retrieve the items from an online vendor’s retail location in Queens.

The charge in the complaint is an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, Chudhary faces a maximum sentence of 20 years’ imprisonment.



The government's case is being handled by the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York's National Security and Cybercrime Section. Assistant United States Attorney Jonathan Algor and Special Assistant United States Attorney Elizabeth A. Hanft are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Kevin C. Nunnally of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

#

NSD

19-922

Do not reply to this message. If you have questions, please use the contacts in the message or call the Office of Public Affairs at 202-514-2007.