



Department of Justice

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VIRGINIA MAN ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO SUPPORT ISIL

WASHINGTON – Nicholas Young, 36, of Fairfax, Virginia, was arrested today on charges of attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization. Young is employed by the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) as a law enforcement officer.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Dana J. Boente of the Eastern District of Virginia and Assistant Director in Charge Paul M. Abbate of the FBI's Washington Field Office made the announcement. Young's initial appearance is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge Theresa C. Buchanan of the Eastern District of Virginia.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, Young has been employed as an MTPD officer since 2003. Law enforcement first interviewed Young in September 2010 in connection with his acquaintance, Zachary Chesser, who had been arrested and subsequently pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. Over the next several years, Young allegedly had numerous interactions with undercover law enforcement personnel and an FBI confidential human source (CHS) regarding his knowledge of and interest in terrorism-related activity. Many of these interactions were recorded. Law enforcement also interviewed Young's family and co-workers. In 2011, Young met with an undercover law enforcement officer, and several of these meetings included another of Young's acquaintances, Amine El Khalifi, who later pleaded guilty to charges relating to his plan to conduct a suicide bombing at the U.S. Capitol Building in 2012.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, in 2011, Young traveled to Libya once and attempted to travel there a second time. Young told FBI agents that he had been with rebels attempting to overthrow the Muammar Qaddafi regime. Baggage searches revealed that Young traveled with body armor, a kevlar helmet and several other military-style items, according to the allegations.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, on about 20 separate occasions in 2014, Young met with the CHS, who posed as a U.S. military reservist of Middle Eastern descent who wanted to travel overseas to join ISIL. During these conversations, Young allegedly advised the CHS on how to evade law enforcement detection by utilizing specific travel methods and advised the CHS to watch out for informants and not discuss his plans with others.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, also in 2014, the CHS led Young to believe that he had successfully left the United States and joined ISIL. In reality, the CHS had no further contact with Young. All further communications between Young and the CHS's email account were actually communications between Young and FBI undercover personnel posing as the CHS. In June 2015, Young emailed the CHS asking for advice from the CHS's commanders on how to send money to ISIL. Young said, "[u]nfortunately I have enough flags on my name that I can't even buy a plane ticket without little alerts ending up in someone's hands, so I imagine banking transactions are automatically monitored and will flag depending on what is going on."

In December 2015, the FBI interviewed Young, ostensibly in connection with an investigation into the whereabouts of the CHS, according to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint. Young allegedly said that the CHS had left the United States to go on a vacation tour in Turkey approximately one year ago. In addition, according to the allegations in the complaint, Young said that he knew of no one in the United States or overseas who helped the CHS cross the Turkish border into Syria.

On July 18, 2016, Young allegedly communicated with a person who he believed to be the CHS regarding purchasing gift cards for mobile-messaging accounts that ISIL purportedly uses in recruiting others to join the terrorist organization. According to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, on July 28, 2016, Young sent 22 gift card codes to the FBI undercover officer posing as the CHS with a message that stated: "Respond to verify receipt . . . may not answer depending on when as this device will be destroyed after all are sent to prevent the data being possibly seen on this end in the case of something unfortunate." The codes were ultimately redeemed by the FBI for \$245, according to court documents.

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

If convicted, Young faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes. If convicted of any offense, the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The MTPD initiated this investigation and continues to work collaboratively with the FBI Washington Field Office's Joint Terrorism Task Force on the case. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Gordon D. Kromberg and John T. Gibbs of the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorney David P. Cora of the National Security Division.

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