



Department of Justice

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KANSAS MAN SENTENCED 30 YEARS IN PLOT TO EXPLODE CAR BOMB AT FORT RILEY

WASHINGTON – John T. Booker Jr., 22, of Topeka, Kan., was sentenced today to 30 years in prison for attempting to detonate a vehicle bomb on the Fort Riley military base in Manhattan, Kan. On Feb. 3, 2016, Booker pleaded guilty to one count of attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction and one count of attempted destruction of government property by fire or explosion.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Dana J. Boente, U.S. Attorney Tom Beall of the District of Kansas and Special Agent in Charge Darrin E. Jones of the FBI's Kansas City Division made the announcement.

“With this sentence, John Booker is being held accountable for his plan to kill U.S. military personnel on American soil in the name of ISIS,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Boente. “The National Security Division’s highest priority is countering terrorist threats and protecting American lives by bringing to justice those who plot to attack us. I want to thank the many agents, analysts, and prosecutors who made this result possible.”

“Violent extremism is a threat to America and all its people,” Acting U.S. Attorney Beall said. “Our goal is to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, financing or carrying out acts of violence.”

“The investigation leading to today's sentencing illustrates the FBI's commitment to disrupting acts of terrorism,” said Special Agent in Charge Jones. “If Mr. Booker had been successful in detonating a car bomb, the results could have been dozens, if not hundreds, of casualties. The FBI and our law enforcement partners remain committed to protecting the citizens of the United States and thwarting acts of terrorism.”

In his guilty plea, Booker admitted he intended to kill American soldiers and to assist ISIS's (Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) fight against the U.S. His plan called for constructing a bomb containing 1,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate. Booker intended to trigger the bomb himself and die in the process, and filmed a video he intended Americans to see after his death.

“You sit in your homes and think this war is just over in Iraq,” Booker said in the video. “Today we will bring the Islamic State straight to your doorstep.”

Unbeknownst to Booker, the bomb that he constructed was made with inert materials, and the two men working with him were undercover informants for the FBI.

The FBI began investigating Booker in March 2014 after he posted on his Facebook page that he wanted to commit jihad. Booker admitted that he tried to enlist in the U.S. Army in order to commit an insider attack against American soldiers like the one at Fort Hood in Texas, but his deadly plans were thwarted when he was denied entry into the Army. In October 2014, Booker began communicating with an undercover FBI informant. He told the undercover FBI informant that he dreamed of being a fighter in the Middle East, and proposed capturing and killing an American soldier.

In March 2015, Booker was introduced to another FBI informant who he believed would help him plan an attack. Booker said he wanted to detonate a suicide bomb because he couldn't be captured, all the evidence would be destroyed, and he would be guaranteed to hit his target. On March 10, 2015, Booker made a video filmed at Freedom Park near Marshall Army Airfield at Fort Riley in which he pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS. That month, he rented a storage unit in Topeka where the bomb would be assembled.

On April 10, 2015, Booker and the informants drove to an area near Fort Riley that Booker believed to be a little-used utility gate where they could enter Fort Riley undetected. He was arrested when he made the final connections on the device that he believed would arm the bomb.

Mr. Boente and Mr. Beall commended the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for their investigation of this case. They also thanked Assistant Trial Attorneys Josh Parecki and Rebecca Magnone of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tony Mattivi of the District of Kansas, who prosecuted this case.

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