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BALTIMORE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THREATENING MASS DESTRUCTION

***Defendant Mailed Letters to Government Officials with White Powder He Claimed
Was Anthrax; Threatened to Bomb Elementary School***

BALTIMORE, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein announces that Robert Darnell Finch, age 35, of Baltimore, Maryland pleaded guilty today to the federal crime of mailing a threatening communication. He admitted that he mailed several threatening letters containing a white powder, which the letters claimed was anthrax, and a letter threatening to bomb an elementary school.

“We will not tolerate any efforts to obstruct or retaliate against state and local law enforcement officials,” said United States Attorney Rosenstein. “Mailing a terroristic threat is a federal crime that has serious consequences.”

According to the agreed statement of facts presented to the court, on March 19, 2005, Finch mailed a communication, accompanied by a white powdery substance, to the District Court of Maryland in Oakland, Maryland, which was received on March 21, 2005. The communication stated in computer-generated bold, large letters, “Surprise you now have anthrax poisoning”. The courthouse was closed for the day and any employee that might have come in contact with the envelope was given antibiotics. After testing at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) laboratory concluded that the white powder was not anthrax, the courthouse re-opened mid-day on March 22, 2005.

Also on March 19, 2005, Finch mailed another communication, again accompanied by a white powdery substance, to the District Court of Maryland in Snow Hill, Maryland. It contained the same threatening communication. Analysis by the DHMH laboratory of the white powder determined that it was not anthrax.

On March 28, 2005, Sandra A. O’Connor, State’s Attorney for Baltimore County, received a computer generated letter in her Towson, Maryland office which had been mailed by Finch. This

letter threatened the lives of Ms. O'Connor and her family. On March 29, 2005, Finch admitted to detectives of the Baltimore County Police Department that he had written and mailed the letter.

On March 28, 2005, a computer generated letter mailed by Finch was received by Joey Hoover (addressed to "Chief Joey Hoover"), the former Chief of Police of Jamestown, Kentucky. The letter contained a white powdery substance and threatened exposure to anthrax. Additionally, the letter stated that Hoover and family members would be killed unless \$200,000 was paid into a designated bank account. Test results of the white powder revealed that it was not anthrax.

Also on March 28, 2005, another computer-generated letter mailed by Finch was received by the Jamestown Elementary School in Jamestown, Kentucky. This school is attended by the daughter of a former law enforcement officer. The letter threatened, among other things, to explode a bomb unless \$75,000 was paid.

On March 29, 2005, the Kenai, Alaska Police Department received a threatening computer-generated letter that was accompanied by a white powdery substance which had been mailed by Finch. The letter made disparaging remarks about the police and told the recipients that they were infected with anthrax. Upon testing, it was learned that the white powder was not anthrax.

Finch pleaded guilty to the crime of conveying false or misleading information by threatening the use of a weapon of mass destruction, in violation of 18 U.S.C. Sections 1038(a)(1) and 2332a(a)(2).

Finch faces a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. U.S. District Court Chief Judge Benson E. Legg has scheduled sentencing for January 5, 2006 at 10:30 am.

United States Attorney Rosenstein commended the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Baltimore County Police Department and expressed appreciation to the Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office for its professionalism and assistance during the course of this investigation. Mr. Rosenstein also praised Assistant U.S. Attorney Harvey E. Eisenberg, the U.S. Attorney's anti-terrorism coordinator, who is prosecuting the case.