



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias
Northern District of Georgia

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

COVINGTON MAN INDICTED FOR HOAX BOMB DEVICE

City of Covington Gas Company Employee Indicted

ATLANTA, GA - BARRON HAYS HARPER, JR., 60, of Covington, Georgia, has been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of placing a hoax bomb device at a natural gas switching station in the City of Covington, and making false statements to FBI agents during the investigation. HARPER will be scheduled for an arraignment on the charges in the next two weeks.

“This defendant’s hoax had to be taken quite seriously, and his prosecution is being taken just as seriously,” said United States Attorney David E. Nahmias. “Hoax threats divert law enforcement and other valuable resources and will not be tolerated.”

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the charges and other information presented in court: On October 26, 2006, HARPER, who at the time was an employee of the City of Covington Gas Company, allegedly placed a suspicious package at a natural gas switching station. Emergency responders went to the location after the device was discovered. Significant federal, state and local law enforcement resources were used in responding to what was believed to be a possible explosive device on a gas line. The defendant initially gave false statements to the federal agents regarding his own involvement in placing the device at the gas line, blaming an unknown person for the offense.

The indictment charges two counts: (1) placing a hoax explosive device at a natural gas line, where it would reasonably be believed to be a genuine explosive device; and (2) giving false statements to the federal agents during the investigation. The charges each carry a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Katherine Monahan is prosecuting the case.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.