



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Release**

May 1, 2003

**MICHAEL HARDEE SENTENCED IN GOLDSTEIN CASE**

Today United States District Court Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich sentenced Michael Hardee, age 50, of Tampa, to 3 years' and 5 months' imprisonment and a fine of \$10,000.00 on charges of conspiracy to maliciously damage or destroy a building by means of fire or explosion, conspiracy to violate civil rights, possession of a short-barrel rifle not registered to the defendant, and possession of a silencer not registered to the defendant.

Hardee had previously entered a guilty plea on October 18, 2003. Hardee received a sentence reduction because of his cooperation that led, in part, to the prosecution of Robert Jay Goldstein and his wife Kristi Lea Goldstein.

Goldstein also previously entered a guilty plea to a three count information charging him with conspiracy to violate civil rights, attempting to damage religious property and obstruction of persons in the free exercise of religious beliefs, and possession of firearms not registered to him. Goldstein is scheduled to be sentenced at 10:00 a.m. on June 19, 2003, by U. S. District Court Judge James S. Moody, Jr.

According to court records, following the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, Goldstein told his friend, Michael Hardee, that he wanted to retaliate against Arab and Muslim people for both the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, as well as ongoing hostilities in the Middle East. During the spring of 2002, Goldstein devised a plan to detonate an explosive device, or devices, at the Islamic Society of Pinellas County - an Islamic Education and Cultural Center in Seminole, Florida. Goldstein's and Hardee's goal in bombing the Islamic Center was to damage the religious and cultural building used by Arabs and Muslims. Hardee agreed to participate in the bombing by driving Goldstein to the Islamic Center where Goldstein would set and detonate the bomb.

According to court documents, on the evening of August 22, 2002, Pinellas County Sheriff's deputies responded to a domestic disturbance call at the Goldstein residence located at 9202 Seminole Boulevard, Apartment #112, Seminole, Florida. The deputies conducted a protective sweep of the apartment and found numerous explosive devices and a number of firearms. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad responded to the scene to secure the explosives and weapons. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also assisted in the investigation.

Also, as a result of the investigation on February 26, 2003, Goldstein's wife, Kristi Goldstein, entered a guilty plea on charges of possession of explosive devices not registered to her. Her sentencing date is June 13, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. before U.S. District Court Judge James S. Moody, Jr. She faces a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

This case was jointly investigated by the U.S. Attorney's Office, ATF, FBI, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). This case is being jointly prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Colleen Murphy-Davis and Department of Justice Civil Rights Attorney Christopher Santoro.

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