



U.S. Department of Justice

KENNETH L. WAINSTEIN
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

Monty Wilkinson (202) 514-6933

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Michigan Van Driver Pleads Guilty To Threats to Blow Up Van At White House Gate

United States Attorney Kenneth L. Wainstein announced that Lowell William Timmers, 54, of 15375 Ritchie Avenue, in Cedar Springs, Michigan, pled guilty today before United States District Court Judge Emmet G. Sullivan to one count of Threats or Maliciously Conveyed False Information to Destroy Property by Means of An Explosive. This offense carries a maximum statutory penalty of ten years. Should Judge Sullivan accept the terms contemplated by the parties in the plea agreement, Timmers is facing a period of 34 months of incarceration when he is sentenced on June 30, 2005.

According to the government's evidence, for almost five hours, on January 18, 2005, just two days before the Presidential Inauguration, Timmers paralyzed a portion of the Nation's Capital and threatened to destroy the White House and those persons in and near it. At approximately 3:37 p.m., a U.S. Secret Service Officer observed Timmers drive a red Ford van to the gate at the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. The area behind the gate is a secure portion of the White House grounds and is closed to public vehicular transportation. When Timmers was told to move his van from that area, he raised his hand, which appeared to contain a switch device with wires attached, and stated: "I want my son, and I'm not leaving until my son-in-law is out of jail. I have ten gallons of gas

in here, and I will blow up the van and the White House.” Timmers refused to surrender, whereupon the Metropolitan Police Department’s Emergency Response Team was called to the scene and initiated attempts to negotiate with Timmers. During the stand-off, several streets and sidewalks near and around the intersection of 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue were closed to all traffic, creating gridlock and massive delays for commuters. At approximately 8:15 p.m. Timmers surrendered, and was arrested. The van was searched by the Metropolitan Police Department’s Explosive Ordinance Division and 6 glass canisters containing gasoline and several plastic canisters containing gasoline were found and recovered. The canisters appeared to be connected to electrical wiring and a light bulb. Timmers told law enforcement officials that he ran the wires to the canisters and also connected them to a light bulb within the vehicle to make it seem that they could be detonated. Timmers arrived in Washington, D.C., that day after leaving from his home in Cedar Springs, Michigan on January 17, 2005. He further admitted to drug use on the day of the incident.

In announcing today’s guilty plea, United States Attorney Wainstein praised the cooperative efforts of members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Joint Terrorism Task Force, including Metropolitan Police Department Detective Seth Holmes and U.S. Secret Service Special Agent Daniel Kurz; U.S. Secret Service Officer Daniel Banks; Metropolitan Police Department Explosive Ordinance Division Sergeant Roger Blair and Technicians Louis Rivera and Joe Dolan; Metropolitan Police Department Mobile Crime Unit Technician Joseph Anderson; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Arson and Explosive Specialists Louis Sackandy and John Winslow; personnel of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives National Laboratory; Metropolitan Police Department Emergency Response Team members Sergeant Charles Yarbaugh, and Officers George Jones, Peter Schumacher, Mark Wascavage, Thomas Miller, Paul Riggins, William Wright, and Daryl Isom; U.S. Attorney’s Office Legal Assistant LaTasha Sams, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Heidi M. Pasichow, who prosecuted the case.