

Colorado Springs Bombing Suspect Says He Targeted Accountant, Not NAACP

COLLAPSE STORY

A man arrested in a bombing outside a Colorado Springs NAACP office told investigators he was targeting an accountant he believed also worked in the building, not the civil rights organization, according to court documents filed Friday.

Thaddeus Cheyenne Murphy, 44, was arrested Thursday and is charged with arson in the Jan. 6 bombing outside the building that houses the NAACP chapter, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Colorado said in a statement. A container of gasoline that had been placed next to the pipe bomb did not ignite, and no one was injured.

According to a criminal complaint, Murphy told investigators he was angry because his accountant, who he said was Steve DeHaven, wouldn't return his phone calls. Murphy said he believed his accountant destroyed his tax records **|** which he needed as part of a bankruptcy proceeding **|** and the bombing was meant to be a warning, according to the complaint.

DeHaven died in June in Mesa, Arizona, the Associated Press reported. It is not clear if Murphy knew that he was dead. DeHaven pleaded guilty to filing false tax returns in 2010 and he was sentenced to three years in federal prison.

Prosecutors said in a statement that the motive in the bombing is still under investigation. Investigators have not said that the NAACP was the target.

The president of the Colorado Springs chapter of the NAACP said he was skeptical that the target was an accountant. There was an old sign for an accountant on the building, he said, but no accountant worked there since at least 1999, he said.

"This guy is a criminal and criminals lie. He's looking for a way to get out of this because he's facing [prison] time," Henry D. Allen Jr., president of the Colorado chapter of the NAACP, told NBC News. " **|** There are only two offices in this building, a [black] barbershop/hair salon and the Colorado Springs chapter of the NAACP."

In addition to arson, Murphy is charged with being a felon in possession of firearms. Investigators found at least seven firearms and road flares during search of Murphy's home Thursday, the complaint said. He could face 15 years in prison and fines up to \$500,000, the statement said.

IN-DEPTH

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SOCIAL

We seek a continued investigation into the motive of the alleged suspect and we look forward to the culmination of his criminal trial.

| Cornell Brooks (@CornellWBrooks) February 20, 2015

BREAKING: #9NEWS Thaddeus Murphy arrested for Co. Springs bombing at building that housed NAACP & other businesses. pic.twitter.com/2g3qesisP5

| jeremyjojola (@jeremyjojola) February 20, 2015

— Elisha Fieldstadt and Chandra Thomas Whitfield

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U.S. NEWS

21 minutes

Tairod Pugh Pleads Not Guilty to Charges of Trying to Join ISIS

COLLAPSE STORY

Air Force veteran accused of attempting to join ISIS



TODAY

A former U.S. Air Force mechanic accused of attempting to join ISIS appeared Wednesday in a Brooklyn federal court, where he pleaded not guilty to terrorism charges.

Tairod Nathan Webster Pugh entered the plea before Judge Nicholas Garaufis, [NBC New York reported](#). Pugh faces two criminal counts, including attempting to provide material support to a terror organization.

According to the indictment, Pugh was fired from a job in Kuwait as an airplane mechanic in December 2014. He then allegedly flew from Egypt to Turkey on January 10 in an effort to cross the border into Syria to join ISIS and wage violent jihad.

Turkish authorities denied him entry into the country, however, and sent him on back to Egypt. He was deported from Egypt to the U.S. in January 15, after he was found carrying suspicious items, including a photograph of a machine gun. While Pugh was arrested Jan. 16, the case has been sealed.

Prosecutors said searches of his laptop revealed online queries about borders and crossing points controlled by the Islamic State, and videos showing ISIS executions. Social-media posts showed Pugh repeatedly professed a desire never to return to the U.S., even though he has family — including children — in the country.

Pugh served in the Air Force from 1986 to 1990 as an avionics instrument specialist, according to court documents. After leaving the Air Force, officials say, Pugh worked for a number of companies in the U.S. and Middle East as an avionics specialist and airplane mechanic.

IN-DEPTH