

# *States News Service*

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## **Cannon County Man Pleads Guilty in Domestic Violence Firearm and Bomb Case**

[Nashville, TN] – The following information was released by the U.S. Department of Justice:

Jim Vines, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee, and James Cavanaugh, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives, Truman Jones, Sheriff, Rutherford County announced that James Bradley Pursell, 32, of Auburntown, Tennessee, pled guilty today in United States District Court to possessing and discharging a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence and manufacturing a destructive device. Pursell faces a sentence of twenty years without the possibility of parole.

According to documents filed in the case, this matter arose from an escalating series of domestic violence incidents committed by the defendant against his now ex-wife. An Order of Protection was entered August 2003, which the defendant admitted violating in September and December 2003. During that time period, the victim received threatening letters in the mail.

On January 4, 2004, Det. Ron Killings of the Rutherford County Sheriff's Department responded to a shots-fired call at the victim's residence where he observed that the rear window of her car had been shot out. The victim reported she had returned to her residence and was opening her front door at approximately 8:30 p.m. when she heard four gunshots.

On January 11, 2004, Det. Killings arrested the defendant for Harassment, Aggravated Domestic Assault, and Threatening Telephone Calls, after the victim reported receiving approximately 50 telephone calls that day during which she could hear music playing in the background. Shortly after the last call was received, the defendant was located at a pay phone matching the telephone number on the victim's caller identification box.

While the defendant was in custody on those charges, Det. Killings began monitoring the defendant's telephone calls from the jail. On January 12, 2004, the defendant called his mother and asked her to contact his father about a box in his kitchen with "her name on it." The defendant warned his mother that his father should not open the box or move it much. Later that day, the defendant asked his father if he had moved the box from the defendant's residence. The defendant stated to his father that the box was dangerous and could explode.

On January 29, 2004, Detectives Killings, Mickey McCollough, David Hailey, and Sgt. Bret Reed located the box moved and buried by the defendant's father in the yard of the defendant's residence in Auburntown. Upon discovering the cardboard box, the detectives notified law

enforcement agencies specializing in explosive devices. The responding agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Tennessee Highway Patrol Special Operations Division, the Tennessee Bomb and Arson Section, and the Cannon County Sheriff's Department observed what appeared to be an improvised explosive device (IED).

As part of his guilty plea, the defendant admitted mailing a threat to injure another person. He admitted discharging .22 caliber semi-automatic pistol in the direction of the victim and her vehicle as she was attempting to enter her residence in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in furtherance of that threatening communication. Additionally, the defendant asked another person to provide a false alibi to account for his whereabouts when he was near the victim's residence at the time of the shooting.

He also admitted making the IED, which constitutes a destructive device under federal law. The defendant manufactured the device to explode when it was triggered by opening the top of a cardboard box. Inside the box, he affixed insulated wires, two mousetraps, matches, striker plates, explosive powder, and copper tubes packed with explosive powder. He admitted he intended to deliver the device to his then-wife if she would not let him see his son.

Pursell will be sentenced by Chief United States District Court Judge Robert L. Echols on September 12, 2005.

United States Attorney Jim Vines released this statement, "A person who threatens his own family and takes the necessary steps to carry out the threats, presents a very serious danger, not only to the victim, but to the community as well. The use of firearms and bombs in domestic violence or any other crimes of violence will be vigorously prosecuted by our office."

This investigation was jointly conducted by the Rutherford County Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Assistant U.S. Attorneys T.J. Haycox and Sam Williamson prosecuted the case for the government.

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