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## **Man Arrested in Bomb Plot in Maryland**

By [CHARLIE SAVAGE](#) and [GARY GATELY](#)

WASHINGTON — A 21-year-old recent convert to Islam tried to blow up a military recruiting station in a Baltimore suburb on Wednesday, ensnaring himself in a sting operation orchestrated by the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), law enforcement officials said.

The man, Antonio Martinez, who now calls himself Muhammad Hussain, thought he was detonating a real car bomb at the Catonsville recruiting office, [according to a criminal complaint filed against him in federal court](#). But he had actually been interacting with the F.B.I., and the bomb was a fake.

The public was "never in actual danger as this device was inert, and his activities were monitored very closely as the plot developed," said Richard A. McFeely, the special agent in charge of the F.B.I.'s Baltimore division.

Mr. Martinez made his initial appearance in the federal courthouse in Baltimore on Wednesday afternoon. He faces charges of attempted murder of federal officials and attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction. A magistrate judge scheduled a detention hearing for Monday.

Joseph A. Balter, a deputy federal public defender appointed to represent Mr. Martinez, said, "It's much too early for anyone to come to any conclusions about the outcome, and we just request that the public reserve judgment and let the legal process proceed as it should."

According to an 18-page complaint, Mr. Martinez believed that the United States was responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and had "accused Muslims of committing the attacks as an excuse to fight them." He said soldiers were legitimate targets, the complaint said.

He apparently came to the F.B.I.'s attention in October after striking up an acquaintanceship with a government informant. That person, the complaint said, showed the authorities [Facebook](#) messages from Mr. Martinez that expressed an interest in joining jihadists in Afghanistan.

The informant also claimed that Mr. Martinez had said, apparently in a conversation that was not recorded, that he wanted to attack a recruiting station.

In later conversations that were recorded, they discussed carrying out such an attack. The informant also offered to introduce Mr. Martinez to an "Afghani" bomb maker, who was actually an undercover F.B.I. agent.

Meanwhile, throughout October and November, Mr. Martinez used his Facebook page to praise Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical Muslim cleric who has called for terrorist attacks, and to post a video of insurgents attacking Western troops.

He also tried to recruit three people to join him, but was rebuffed, the complaint said.

One person is said to have told him the plan was "wrong ideologically, would cause harm to Muslims, and probably would result in Martinez getting caught."

After the third failed recruiting effort, he told the informant, "I guess I'm gonna have to do it myself ... we're just gonna have to do it ourselves ... I'm O.K. with that," the complaint said.

The plans were almost disrupted by news of the arrest of a teenager in Oregon in a bomb plot at a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Mr. Martinez called the informant in agitation, the complaint said, wondering whether he, too, was being "set up." But he decided to move forward.

In early December, the undercover F.B.I. agent met with Mr. Martinez and gave him an S.U.V. rigged with a dummy explosive. They discussed where to park the vehicle so it would cause the most damage, as well as a plan to flee to Afghanistan.

On several occasions, the informant and the agent said they would understand if Mr. Martinez did not want to proceed, the complaint said, but he insisted that he did.

On Wednesday morning, the complaint said, Mr. Martinez parked the vehicle at the recruiting station and then — after he believed that soldiers had arrived there — tried to detonate it with a remote trigger. He was immediately arrested.

In his brief court appearance later Wednesday, an unshaven and shaggy-haired Mr. Martinez wore an untucked, long-sleeved white shirt buttoned to the top and faded jeans. He gave his name as Muhammad Hussain; when asked about his legal name, he replied, "That is my other name I was born with."

He also told the judge that he did construction work to support his wife but could not afford a lawyer.

His Facebook page says he graduated in 2005 from Laurel High School in Laurel, Md. His wife's Facebook page says she is a senior majoring in English and education at Pine Manor College, a women-only school in a suburb of Boston. She did not respond to an e-mail.

The complaint also said Mr. Martinez told the informant that he did not have a cellphone and moved from place to place to live, that he had an unspecified criminal record, and that his mother was not happy about how he was living his life.

Mr. Martinez's Facebook page lists his interests as worshiping God and — using Islamic terms — vocal songs, prayer, proselytizing, religious stories and the Koran. It also lists marriage, learning, work and the movies "The Last Samurai" and "Avatar."

In a biography section, he wrote: "IM just a yung brotha from the wrong side of the tracks who embraced Islam," adding: "We gotta rise up inshallah and continue the establishment of Islam on the earth with the help and guidance of Allah we can ya muslimeen!!!"

It also says he is "Looking for: friendship."

Charlie Savage reported from Washington, and Gary Gately from Baltimore.