

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Central District of California

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

NATHANIEL JAMES MCGUIRE

Case No.

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT BY TELEPHONE OR OTHER RELIABLE ELECTRONIC MEANS

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date of September 25, 2024, in the county of Santa Barbara in the Central District of California, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

Offense Description

18 U.S.C. § 844(i)

Malicious Damage to a Building by Means of an Explosive

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

Please see attached affidavit.

Continued on the attached sheet.

[Redacted signature]

Complainant's signature

[Redacted name and title]

Printed name and title

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by telephone.

Date: 9/26/24

Joel Richlin

Judge's signature

City and state: Los Angeles, California

Hon. Joel Richlin, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

AUSA: Mark Takla ([Redacted])

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, [REDACTED], being duly sworn, declare and state as follows:

I. **INTRODUCTION**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2. This affidavit is made in support of a criminal complaint against and arrest warrant for Nathaniel James McGuire (“MCGUIRE”) for a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 844(i) (Malicious Damage to a Building by Means of an Explosive).

3. The facts set forth in this affidavit are based upon my personal observations, my training and experience, and information obtained from various law enforcement personnel and witnesses. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested warrant and does not purport to set forth all my knowledge of, or investigation into, this matter. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, all conversations and statements described in this affidavit are related in substance and in part only. All sums are approximate and all dates are “on or about” the date stated, unless otherwise stated.

## **II. LEGAL BACKGROUND**

4. Based on my training and consultations with the United States Code, I know that 18 U.S.C. § 844(i) states:

Whoever maliciously damages or destroys, or attempts to damage or destroy, by means of fire or an explosive, any building, vehicle, or other real or personal property used in interstate or foreign commerce or in any activity affecting interstate or foreign commerce shall be imprisoned for not less than 5 years and not more than 20 years, fined under this title, or both; and if personal injury results to any person, including any public safety officer performing duties as a direct or proximate result of conduct prohibited by this subsection, shall be imprisoned for not less than 7 years and not more than 40 years, fined under this title, or both; and if death results to any person, including any public safety officer performing duties as a direct or proximate result of conduct prohibited by this subsection, shall also be subject to imprisonment for any term of years, or to the death penalty or to life imprisonment.

## **III. STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE**

### **A. On September 25, 2024, MCGUIRE Detonated an Improvised Explosive Device at the Santa Maria Courthouse**

5. Based on information contained in an affidavit by Santa Barbara Sheriff Deputy Thomas Brownlee made in support of a search warrant, I learned the following:

a. On September 25, 2024, MCGUIRE entered the Courthouse located at 312 E. Cook Street C in Santa Maria, California (the “Courthouse”).

b. A deputy with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office (“SBSO”) saw MCGUIRE throw a bag into the lobby. The bag exploded and

MCGUIRE left the Courthouse on foot. MCGUIRE was shortly thereafter captured and detained by the SBSO as he was trying to access a red Ford Mustang outside the Courthouse. The deputy saw ammunition, a flare gun, and a box of fireworks in the red Ford Mustang. MCGUIRE yelled that the government had taken his guns and that everyone needed to fight, rise up, and rebel.

6. The explosion injured at least five individuals who were present at the Courthouse at that time.

7. According to FBI SA Briahna Winter, who interviewed a security guard who participated in the apprehension of MCGUIRE after MCGUIRE left the Courthouse. The individual stated he felt body armor on MCGUIRE's person and saw ammunition fall out of MCGUIRE's pocket as MCGUIRE was apprehended.

8. The following is a photograph of the damage to the Courthouse showing that the explosion caused significant and noticeable damage:



**B. Law Enforcement Found Additional Devices in the Red Mustang**

9. The SBSO and FBI conducted a search of the red Ford Mustang and found a shotgun, a lever action rifle, ammunition, a suspected explosive device, and 10 Molotov cocktails.<sup>1</sup>

10. A picture of the shotgun, lever action rifle, ammunition, and Molotov cocktails is below:



11. According to the on-scene bomb technician, the suspected improvised explosive device was a can containing a black powder with nails glued to the outside. The device was wrapped in duct tape. A presumptive field test of the black powder inside the suspected explosive device tested as energetic. A presumptive field test of the liquid inside of the Molotov cocktails identified the substance as isopropyl alcohol. Based on the training and experience of the on-

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<sup>1</sup> Based on my training and experience, I know that a Molotov cocktail is a hand-thrown incendiary weapon consisting of a frangible container filled with flammable substances and equipped with a fuse.

scene bomb technician, energetic materials and isopropyl alcohol can be used to make improvised explosive devices.

12. A picture of the suspected improvised explosive device before it was rendered safe is below:



C. **Law Enforcement Found Bomb Making Materials in MCGUIRE's Residence**

13. The FBI executed a search of MCGUIRE's residence. According to FBI SA Kyle Hicks who participated in the search of the residence, the FBI found the following items from MCGUIRE's bedroom: an empty metal can with nails glued to the outside, a duffel bag containing matches, black powder, used and unused fireworks, and papers that appeared to be recipes for explosive/energetic material. Based on the training and experience of the on-scene bomb technician,

each of these materials can be used to make and/or ignite improvised explosive devices.

14. A picture of the metal can with nails glued to the outside found in MCGUIRE's room is below:



**D. MCGUIRE Told Law Enforcement He Wanted to Kill Sheriff Deputies and a Judge**

15. Based on information I received from FBI SA Michael Slovek, SA Slovek and SBSO Deputy Geoff Roberts conducted a recorded Mirandized interview of MCGUIRE. SA Slovek told me that MCGUIRE told law enforcement the following:

a. MCGUIRE arrived at the Courthouse with the intention to kill the deputies working at the security desk inside the Courthouse. When MCGUIRE threw the bag upon entering the Courthouse he yelled "Liberty or Death."



b. After throwing the bag, MCGUIRE intended to go back to his car, a red Ford Mustang, to get a shotgun, a lever action rifle, and Molotov cocktails. MCGUIRE then intended to reenter Courthouse to kill a judge.

c. On September 24, 2024, MCGUIRE tested two explosive devices. One detonated successfully and the other did not. MCGUIRE stated the device that did not detonate was in the red Ford Mustang that MCGUIRE drove to the Courthouse.

d. MCGUIRE stated that he had a package of gun powder and a semi-complete explosive device at his residence. MCGUIRE stated he purchased some nails from a Home Depot on September 23, 2024.

e. MCGUIRE stated his laptop would contain a list of grievances and goodbyes to his family and friends.

#### **E. The Courthouse**

16. According to the Courthouse's website,<sup>2</sup> the Courthouse is a courthouse of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Barbara, and handles the following types of cases: civil, family law, small claims, mental health, probate, and appeals. On September 26, 2024, the website stated the Courthouse would be closed through September 29, 2024 due to a "security incident."

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.santabarbara.courts.ca.gov/location/santa-maria-cook-division> (last viewed on September 26, 2024).



17. According to the Court Executive Officer, Darrel Parker (“Parker”), the Courthouse uses a case tracking service operated by Tyler Technologies located in Plano, Texas, and a legal research service operated by Thomson Reuters Corporation located in Toronto, Canada. Parker also provided several civil complaint filings relating to civil actions filed in the Courthouse, which identify some litigants as residing and/or being located outside the state of California.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

18. For the reasons described above, I respectfully submit there is probable cause to believe that MCGUIRE committed a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 844(i) (Malicious Damage to a Building by Means of an Explosive).

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by telephone on this 26<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024.



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UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

A. Joel Richlin