

In bombing case, 3-year probe took 14 months

By John Ellement and Matt Brelis
GLOBE STAFF

Alfred W. Trenkler was behind the wheel of his black Toyota last Wednesday, driving down Morrissey Boulevard toward a bank with two friends and sometime employees, when 14 months of investigative work suddenly caught up with him.

After pulling Trenkler over, agents from the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Boston Police detectives arrested him, with guns drawn, on a five-count federal indictment that alleges he conspired with 21-year-old Thomas A. Shay to build a bomb that was to be used in a plot to kill Shay's father.

"It was like a movie," said Brian O'Leary, one of the two passengers in Trenkler's car. "There were all these guys with their [guns] out, pointing at us."

Instead of killing Shay's father, Thomas L. Shay, at his Roslindale home, the bomb detonated on Oct. 28, 1991, killing Officer Jeremiah J. Hurley and wounding his bomb squad partner, Francis X. Foley, the government alleges.

Within weeks of Hurley's death, investigators had identified Trenkler, 36, and Shay as their prime suspects. And despite reward money that once totaled \$65,000, officials said they received little help from the public as they pursued the individuals they believed were re-

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sponsible for the "freak circumstances" that led to Hurley's death.

Instead the agents and detectives compressed what amounts to nearly three years of investigative work into 14 months, which last week produced the charges against the two Quincy men who could potentially face the death penalty.

"Every piece of evidence had to be painstakingly developed," Terence J. McArdle, special agent in charge of the ATF Boston office, said last week. "Investigators received very little outside information."

Both Shay and Trenkler have pleaded not guilty to the charges and in the preceding months have denied they are responsible for the bomb blast. Trenkler's mother, Josephine Wallace, last Friday added her voice in support of her son, saying that the oldest of her two children was innocent.

"We know he didn't do it," she said. "He had nothing whatsoever to do with this."

In statements read to reporters and in interviews, Shay has acknowledged knowing Trenkler - Shay was in fact the first to publicly link Trenkler to the case. Shay said the two met at the Back Bay train station.

At the arraignments of the two men last week, Assistant US Attorneys Paul Kelly and Frank Libby did not discuss a motive for the bombing. But at Trenkler's detention hearing on Friday, Kelly's line of questioning of ATF agent Jeff Kerr seemed to suggest Trenkler could have been motivated by money.

Kerr testified before US Judge Magistrate Marianne Bowler that Trenkler has filed federal income tax returns only twice in the past five years. And in the returns that were filed, Kerr testified, Trenkler reported a total income of about \$10,000 for two years.

At the time of the bombing, the senior Shay had a lawsuit pending in Suffolk Superior Court that demanded \$400,000 from a Dedham auto center. Sources familiar with the investigation have said the younger Shay had queried his father's attorney about whether a lawsuit would survive if his father was killed. Shay was told that the lawsuit could be inherited by the senior Shay's heirs, the sources have said.

Shay has a lengthy history of psychiatric treatment that began when he was 5 years old and was committed to a special school for children after he allegedly tried to set the family home on fire.

Like Trenkler's, Shay's parents are divorced. According to court records, the 15-year-marriage between Thomas and Nancy Shay unraveled

amid beatings of Nancy Shay in front of Thomas Shay and other children by a previous marriage.

The younger Shay has described himself as someone overwhelmed by a loneliness so powerful that he would occasionally attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings - even though he said he is not an alcoholic - in hopes of being befriended.

Unlike Shay, who left Massachusetts after the bombing and drifted to San Francisco, where he was living under an assumed name, Trenkler stayed in the Boston area and continued to work in electronics, a field he showed an unusual aptitude for at an early age.

Trenkler has had the support of his mother and stepfather, who hired Terry P. Segal, a criminal attorney, to represent their son shortly after federal agents and Boston Police executed a search warrant Jan. 13 for Trenkler's Quincy apartment.

Trenkler's legal problems were not a secret at the family house on Whitelawn Avenue in Milton, where they were discussed last Easter after his mother, Josephine Wallace, bailed her son out of a police lockup.

Trenkler was arrested that Friday on an outstanding default warrant from Rhode Island after bouncing a check for slightly more than \$1,000 to a subcontractor he had hired to help build radio signal towers in Cumberland, R.I. Trenkler eventually paid the amount, and the charges were dropped.

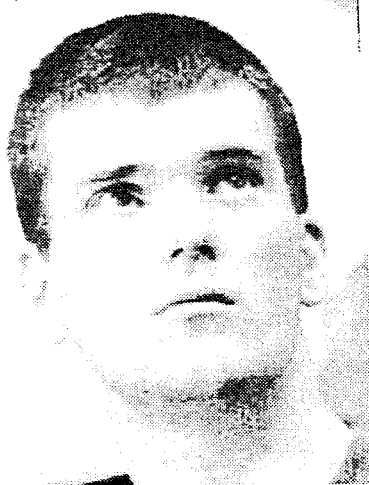
Jack Wallace, who became Trenkler's stepfather 31 years ago, talked about last Easter when he testified at Trenkler's detention hearing on Friday.

At the dinner table that night, Alfred Trenkler told his parents that when he was being detained in a police lockup, a federal ATF agent said, "Get used to this because you are going to be in here for the rest of your life."

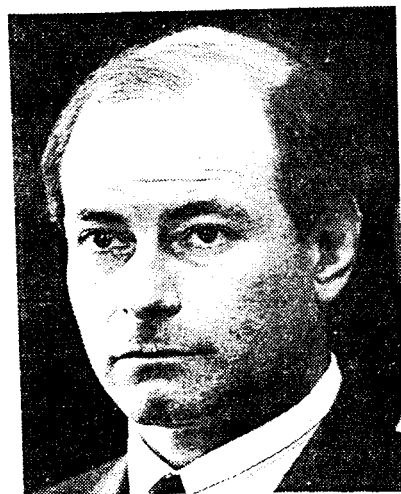
His half-brother, David Wallace, testified that once last summer he tried to tell Trenkler about Gov.

Weld's support for restoring the death penalty for people convicted of killing a police officer with explosives.

But, before David Wallace could finish, he testified, his brother interjected by saying, "Yeah, they want to give me the death penalty."



THOMAS A. SHAY
Pleaded not guilty



ALFRED W. TRENKLER
Denies role in plot

*Trenkler
bounced
check*