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Defendant in officer's death is said linked to earlier bomb

By Matthew Brelis
GLOBE STAFF

A computer analysis of more than 14,000 bombs planted nationwide between 1979 and 1991 found only one bomb that was nearly identical to the bomb that killed a Boston police officer in 1991, according to court documents.

The matching bomb was planted in Quincy in 1986 and built by Alfred Trenkler, a Quincy engineer awaiting trial on charges that he built the bomb that killed Officer Jeremiah Hurley Jr. on Oct. 28, 1991, in Roslindale, according to the document.

Calling the two bombs "remarkably similar," federal prosecutors argued in a memorandum filed in US District Court that they should be able to present evidence about the 1986 bombing at the federal trial of Trenkler's codefendant, Thomas A. Shay, which is scheduled to start June 28.

"As a practical matter, in order

to prove the charged offense, the government will be required to prove at trial that one of the conspirators, either Shay, or Trenkler, had the knowledge, skill, ability and experience to build an explosive device," the filing states.

Shay is accused of enlisting Trenkler in a scheme to kill his father, Thomas L. Shay, by planting a bomb under his car. Hurley was killed and his partner, Francis X. Foley, was injured when they responded to a call from the elder Shay reporting a suspicious box that had fallen from the underside of his car at his home on Eastbourne Street in Roslindale. The officers were inspecting the box when it exploded.

The prosecution said its computer analysis proves that the same electronic components used in the bomb that killed Hurley were used in a bomb that Trenkler allegedly built for a friend in 1986. Trenkler was charged with unlawful posses-

sion of an explosive in 1986 for allegedly building a bomb that was ignited under a Quincy fish company truck. The charge was continued without a finding after Trenkler cooperated with authorities in an unrelated case, according to sources.

"The government's explosive expert will testify that the presence, in each device, of this combination of features, coupled with the similar modus operandi, amply demonstrates the 'signature' quality of the devices, that is, that it is more probable than not that the 1986 and 1991 devices were designed and constructed by the same person," the document states.

The prosecution asserts that such "signature" type evidence is admissible under federal rules of evidence.

Shay's attorney, Nancy Gertner, could not be reached for comment. Terry Segal, Trenkler's attorney, said he will file a "detailed response that refutes many points."

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