

Father testifies against man accused in blast that killed officer

By Matthew Brelis
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The man the government considers the target of a bomb that killed a Boston police officer took the stand yesterday and detailed a "strained" relationship with his only son — the person on trial for the 1991 Roslindale blast.

Thomas L. Shay told jurors in US District Court that he barely knew his son, Thomas A. Shay, who frequently lived in state homes from the age of 4 or 5 until he was 18. The younger Shay was banished from his father's home when he was 16.

Just 16 days before the Oct. 28, 1991, blast killed Bomb Squad Officer Jeremiah Hurley Jr. and seriously wounded his partner, Francis X. Foley, in the elder Shay's driveway, young Shay slipped his father a note after a day at the dog races in New Hampshire.

But, the elder Shay admitted yesterday, he never read the note. Instead he tossed it into the ashtray in his car, where it lay forgotten until it was discovered by police investigating the bombing that claimed their comrade.

When asked by Assistant US Attorney Paul V. Kelly to read the note in court yesterday, the elder Shay stumbled over the missive that read in part: "Dad, thanks for a real fun time. I hope that we can do this more often. It's like old times... Dad, thanks for being my Dad again... See you, Love Tommy."

The elder Shay, who appeared unmoved by his son's note, admitted, "I never read the note before today."

Prosecutors allege that the neglect that the elder Shay, 49, exhibited toward his son throughout his life that prompted Shay, 21, of Quincy, to plot to kill him. An engineer

friend of Shay's, Alfred Trenkler, who is accused of building the bomb, is to stand trial later.

Prosecutors also have alleged the younger Shay hoped to inherit a portion of a \$400,000 civil suit his father anticipated winning.

The elder Shay, testifying for the prosecution, told jurors a black box dropped from his car as he pulled out of his driveway on Eastbourne Street Oct. 27, 1991. Uncertain what

it was, he said, he picked it up, turned it over and dropped it next to a trash can before going inside to watch football. He later moved the device behind a van parked in his driveway because he thought it might have been part of an alarm on his girlfriend's car.

The elder Shay said it didn't occur to him that it could be a bomb until he mentioned the device to a mechanic the next day. He then

alerted police.

When Hurley and Foley arrived and examined the device, Shay said, Foley told him, "don't worry, it doesn't look like anything." He said when the officers were examining the bomb he heard "a tapping and scratching noise and then the explosion."

Yesterday, the younger Shay sat 25 feet from the stand and scribbled notes on a legal pad as his father,

under oath, calmly described their relationship.

In June 1988, the elder Shay said, he allowed his son to live with him and his girlfriend, Mary Flanagan.

But after a few weeks, the elder Shay said, he banished the young man. Court records indicate Shay accused his son of stealing cash from him and coins and jewelry from Flanagan.

"I told him he would never be forgiven by Mary for what he had done," Shay said. "The relationship was strained after that."

In 1991, Shay sent word to his son that his sworn statement would be needed in a lawsuit the father had filed against his landlords. He said the young man apparently learned of the potential windfall from the suit when he was deposed for the lawsuit on Sept. 13, 1991.