

Shay trial hears ATF expert

By Paul Langner
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The prosecution in the bombing trial of Thomas A. Shay, who is charged in the Oct. 28, 1991, blast that killed a Boston police officer, introduced evidence yesterday to show that Shay's alleged conspirator was unusually sophisticated in the principles of bomb-making.

Dennis Leahy, an explosives expert with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, testified in US District Court that Alfred W. Trenkler used such terms as "blasting caps," "shunt," "leg wires" and "sympathetic detonation" in a conversation in his parents' driveway.

Trenkler, who is to be tried later, was not being interrogated at the time, Leahy told assistant US Attorney Paul V. Kelly. According to Leahy, Trenkler was bantering with the agents and officers who were searching the garage at his parents' Milton home on Jan. 31, 1992. When asked where he had learned so much about bombs, Trenkler laughingly replied that he had learned from television, Leahy said.

Kelly and assistant US Attorney Frank A. Libby Jr. contend that Shay and Trenkler collaborated on building the bomb intended to kill Shay's father, Thomas L. Shay. Instead, the bomb apparently fell off the undercarriage of the elder Shay's car as he pulled into the driveway of his Roslindale home.

Bomb Squad Officer Jeremiah Hurley was killed when the bomb exploded in his hands, and Officer Francis X. Foley was gravely injured.

On Thursday, Lawrence E. Plant of Quincy testified that he shared a cell with Shay in October 1992 in the Plymouth House of Correction, where Shay was being held on charges unrelated to the bombing.

According to Plant, Shay introduced himself as "Boom-boom" and said, "I killed the Boston cop." Plant said Shay told him that he and Trenkler had built a bomb and attached it to Shay's father's car in an attempt to kill him.

Kelly and Libby claim that the younger Shay wanted revenge for a childhood of abuse and also wanted a \$400,000 judgment that his father was trying to win in a lawsuit.

Shay's attorney, Nancy Gertner, is trying to show that the elder Shay might have planted the bomb to cast suspicion on his adversaries in the lawsuit. Gertner has also shown that Thomas L. Shay derived a large share of his income from filing personal injury suits.