

Boston Globe Nov. 23, 1993

Trenkler jury hears closing arguments

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GLOBE STAFF

Alfred W. Trenkler was a cold, calculating engineer who used his knowledge and skill to build a bomb for his occasional lover Thomas A. Shay, federal prosecutors said yesterday in closing arguments in US District Court.

Defense attorney Terry Segal told jurors his client is innocent and the government's circumstantial case falls far short of allowing them to conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that the 37-year-old Milton man built the bomb that killed Boston bomb squad officer Jeremiah J. Hurley Jr.

Segal noted that while federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents and Boston police conducted searches of Trenkler's Quincy apartment, his parents' home in Milton, his workplace and car, they found nothing to connect him to the remote-controlled, dynamite-powered bomb that was attached to the bottom of a car belonging to Shay's father, Thomas L. Shay. In fact, Segal said, Trenkler was helpful to investigators.

The elder Shay testified that a black box with magnets detached from his car when he parked in his Roslindale driveway on Oct. 27, 1991. He went to police the next day.

On Oct. 28, 1991, while bomb squad officer Hurley and his partner, Francis X. Foley, were examining the device, it exploded, fatally wounding Hurley and maiming Foley, who sat yesterday in US District Judge Rya W. Zobel's courtroom for closing arguments.

Prosecutors theorize the bomb was made for Shay, who wanted to kill his father. Prosecutors used a videotape of the younger Shay in which he admits buying a toggle switch at Radio Shack that was used

in the bomb, and a receipt confirming the purchase, in an effort to show that Trenkler made the bomb for Shay.

Trenkler is charged with conspiring with Shay; receiving the explosives, which were shipped in interstate commerce; and attempting to destroy a vehicle, the elder Shay's car, used in interstate commerce.

"The bomb was built to kill, and kill it did," assistant US attorney Frank A. Libby Jr. said.

In the monthlong trial, Libby and assistant US Attorney Paul V. Kelly tried to show that the 1991 bomb was so similar to a 1986 bomb in Quincy that they had to be made by the same person.

Trenkler admitted that in 1986 he made a bomb that was attached to a fish truck and powered by a simulated tank shell, testimony revealed. The bomb was made for another person.

A government bomb expert testified that the two devices were made by the same person. A computer search of 14,000 bombs from 1979 through 1991 matched only those two when asked for all remote-controlled bombs that were attached to the undercarriage of vehicles with round magnets.

But Segal's bomb expert, a former FBI agent, said the two bombs were not made by the same person. And Segal, noting the 1986 bombing was not entered into the database until after the 1991 explosion, argued that the computer search was skewed in an effort to match the two bombings.

The government is also relying on the testimony of convicted marijuana smuggler David Lindholm, who said Trenkler admitted making the bomb while the two were in a holding cell in Plymouth County Jail last December.