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Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information



United States Bomb Data Center

(U) Assessment: Criminal Bombers Count on Victims' Curiosity or Greed for Successful Bomb Attacks



USBDC 12-10

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Executive Summary

(U) Some criminal bombers exploited their victims' sense of greed or general curiosity by hiding improvised explosive devices (IEDs) inside common everyday items and leaving them as discarded merchandise to be found by the victim. Victims then perceived these situations as an unexpected opportunity to obtain an object of value with no associated cost. The devices utilized victim-operated switches rather than command or time switches. While a seemingly discarded working tool or item could be considered an enticement in itself, the lack of a written note or similar enticement distinguished these bombing incidents from other IEDs that utilized written messages to bait the victim. Recent bombing incidents in Phoenix and Glendale, Arizona, might be another example of this tactic.

Scope

(U) The United States Bomb Data Center (USBDC) prepared the following assessment to provide information and analysis regarding criminal bombers using victim-operated IEDs (VOIEDs) hidden in seemingly discarded tools and other items to target victims with an inclination to take these items for their own. This assessment highlights three bombing investigations where criminal bombers utilized this tactic with multiple devices. In order to protect the ongoing investigation into the three bombings in Phoenix and Glendale, Arizona, no specific details about these IEDs will be provided other than those already published by other agencies. A query of the Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS) database identified appropriate cases that utilized these types of devices. Further information on these investigations originated from ATF investigation reports and laboratory reports. All of the incidents originated from the United States, but the assessment could apply to similar cases in other countries.

Key Findings

- (U) Criminal bombers exploited their victims' propensity for greed and general curiosity by concealing IEDs inside common everyday items and leaving them where they could be easily found.
- (U) The IEDs in these cases utilized victim-operated switches to function the devices.
- (U) Each of the highlighted bombings lacked a written note as a means of enticement, possibly because the bombers knew that the victims would take the item based on its perceived intrinsic value without any need to further manipulate the victim with a written enticement.
- The target selection for these bombings was a mixture of random victims or an attack against a victim due to a personal vendetta.

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Introduction

(U) Some criminal bombers exploited their victims' sense of greed or general curiosity by hiding improvised explosive devices (IEDs) inside common everyday items and leaving them as discarded merchandise to be found by the victim. Examples of these tools included electric razors, electric drills, flashlights, and a toolbox. The victims found these items and took them under the belief that the tools were merely discarded but still useable. The bombers used victim-operated switches to function the devices rather than a command switch or a time switch. Using a victim-operated switch avoided premature explosions or having the device initiate when the victim was not in close proximity to the device. Moreover, the bombers in these cases did not use a written enticement to lure the victim into handling the item. Without the enticement, these bombing incidents were differentiated from other bombing incidents with victim-operated switches that used an enticement such as a note, gift wrapping, letter or package or some other method to compel the victim to handle the item and function the IED.

Yellow Plastic 6-Volt Flashlights – Glendale and Phoenix, Arizona

(U) Three (3) VOIEDs, contained within yellow plastic 6-volt handheld flashlights, exploded when victims found these apparently discarded items and tried the on/off switches in order to determine if the flashlights worked. Two of these incidents took place in Glendale, Arizona, on May 13 and May 14, 2012. The other incident took place in Phoenix, Arizona, on May 24, 2012. Further details about the IEDs will be withheld to avoid compromising the criminal investigation.

- May 13, 2012, 1400 hours, Glendale, Arizona – The flashlight was left near a business and discovered in the landscaping area for the business.¹
- May 14, 2012, 0800 hours, Glendale, Arizona – The flashlight was discovered in the landscaping area for a second business.²
- May 24, 2012, 1530 hours, Phoenix, Arizona – The flashlight was found by an employee of a Salvation Army facility while sorting through donations to the Salvation Army.³

Electric Razors – Upper New York State

(U) Two electric razors each contained a VOIED that functioned and injured two victims who attempted to use them. An unwitting victim discovered one razor in a public restroom while the other razor had been for sale in the discount bin at a grocery store. The razors lacked any written note or enticement for the victims other than being free or at a discounted price.



(U) American Tourister Razor

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American Tourister Electric Razor

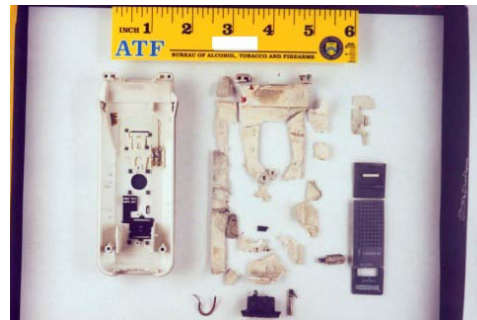
(U) On March 28, 2002, Hosea Crumpler found an American Tourister Range 2000 electric razor in the men's bathroom at the McDonald's restaurant in Brunswick, NY. The razor was present in its carrying case. Crumpler plugged the razor into an electric outlet in his bathroom and turned on the razor.⁴ The resulting explosion caused injuries to Crumpler's hands, chest, face, and eyes. His wife suffered a puncture wound from shrapnel. Fortunately, their 3-year-old daughter did not receive any injuries.⁵

(U) Laboratory analysis of evidence collected from the scene identified the following IED components:⁶

- (U) American Tourister Range 2000 Rechargeable Electric Razor with internal components such as a circuit board and battery removed by the bomber and discarded
- (U) Cylindrical-shaped nickel-plated brass matchbox
- (U) Improvised initiator utilizing wires from razor power cord inserted into matchbox
- (U) Black powder



(U) Comparison of matchbox fragments and exemplar



(U) Comparison between shaver fragments and exemplar

High Quality Rotary Electric Razor

(U) On October 12, 2002, James Burdick received injuries to his face and hand when a VOIED concealed within the High Quality BC-388 Rotary Chargeable shaver he was using exploded. Mrs. Burdick purchased the razor from the discount bin at the Price Chopper Supermarket in Bennington, Vermont, as a birthday present for her husband. Interviews with Price Chopper employees indicated that the razor had been left in the return item/damage bin at the grocery store but was moved to the discount bin by store employees.⁷

(U) Laboratory analysis of evidence collected from the scene identified the following IED components:⁸

- (U) High Quality BC-388 Rotary Chargeable Shaver with box and carrying case
- (U) Circuit board, battery and other components removed from razor

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- (U) Improvised pouch manufactured from plastic bag and tape
- (U) Improvised initiator utilizing wires from the razor inserted into the pouch
- (U) Black powder



(U) High Quality BC-388 Shaver used in IED incident



(U) Improvised pouch for black powder with improvised initiator wires

Electric Drill Bombs – San Diego County

(U) Paul Raymond Farris built two VOIEDs, each concealed within an electric drill. These modified electric drills were left in areas where the intended victims would find them and conclude that the drills were discarded but still functional. No invitation, note or other victim enticement accompanied the devices.

First Drill Bomb

(U) On April 11, 1994, Paul Raymond Farris targeted his ex-wife's son-in-law, Robert Holliday, with an IED concealed within a variable speed $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch electric drill. Farris resented that Holliday encouraged Farris's girlfriend to leave him. After his arrest in 1995, Farris stated that he paid an acquaintance \$20 to place the assembled drill bomb into the back of Robert Holliday's pickup truck.⁹ The original plan possibly changed when Robert Holliday's wife told a witness that a young neighborhood girl found the drill at the base of their driveway. The device functioned in Robert Holliday's hand when he plugged it into a wall socket in order to test it.¹⁰

(U) Laboratory analysis of evidence collected from the scene identified the following IED components:

- (U) Model 801 variable speed $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch electric drill manufactured by Wen Products, Inc.
- (U) 1-inch diameter cardboard cylinder measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length
- (U) Cardboard end plugs
- (U) Improvised initiator utilizing a black insulated wire inserted into a drinking straw section
- (U) Unidentified explosive residues¹¹

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Second Drill Bomb

(U) On February 12, 1995, a second drill bomb exploded and injured John William Boatman and Thomas Dean Richard. Boatman sustained severe injuries that included damage to his hand, eyes, and associated burns to his face and hands. Richard suffered a laceration on his back. Paul Raymond Farris manufactured this second drill bomb on behalf of a friend, Ross Roe. Roe wanted revenge on Thomas Richard whom he suspected of selling his welding equipment without permission. Farris drove Roe to Richard's residence where Roe left the device. Toby Richard, son of the targeted victim, found the drill in the yard and brought it to the house. Thomas Richard and John Boatman decided to test the drill to determine its functionality. Boatman squeezed the trigger of the drill after Richard plugged in the drill. The concealed device functioned with the subsequent injuries to the victims.¹²

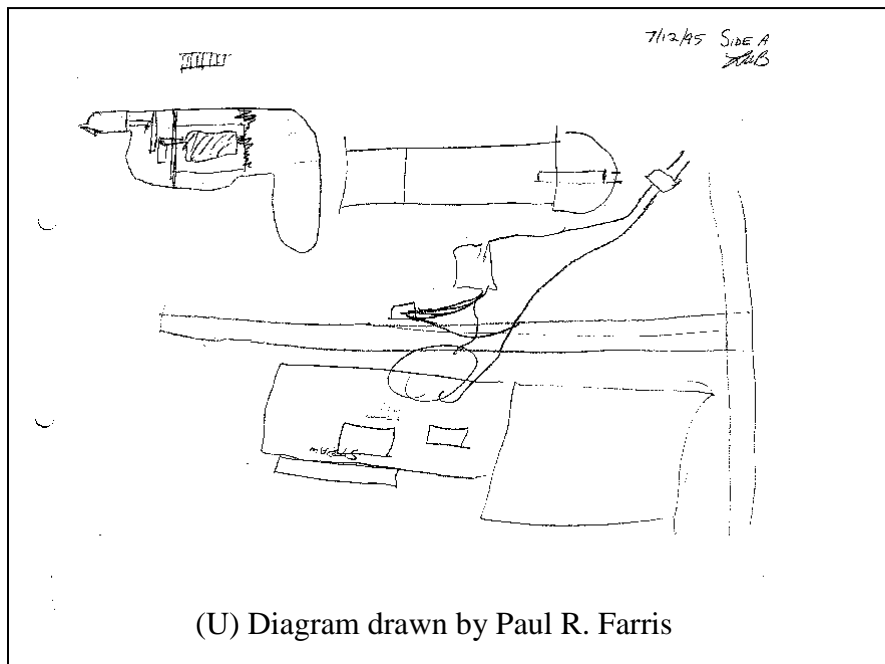
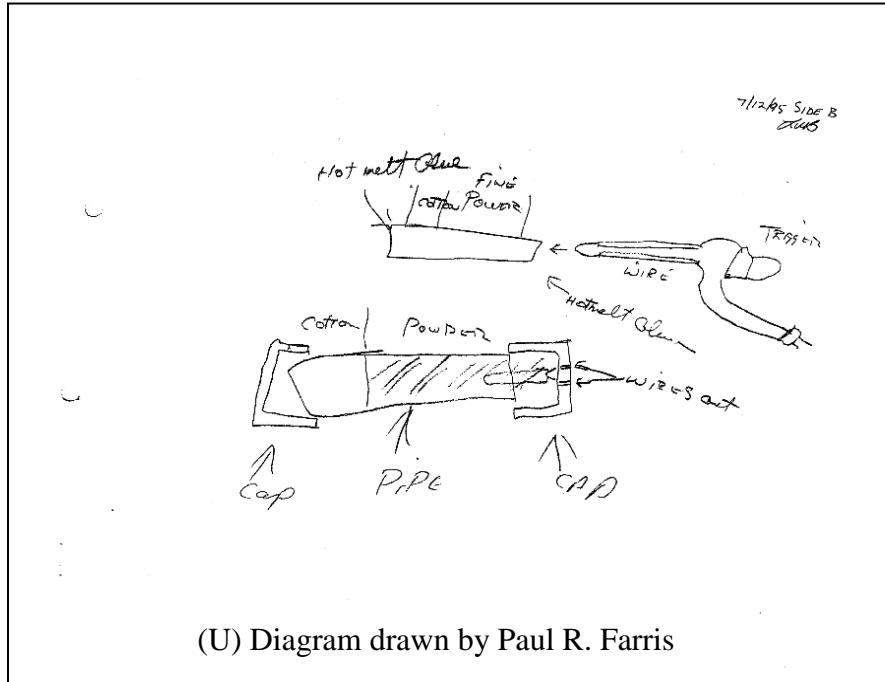
(U) Laboratory analysis of the evidence collected from the scene identified the following IED components:¹³

- (U) Black and Decker variable speed ¼-inch electric drill
- (U) Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) fragments from pipe and/or fittings
- (U) Improvised initiator utilizing green insulated wire inserted into drinking straw section
- (U) Lead shot
- (U) Residues of black powder explosive and nitroglycerin (smokeless powder) detected

(U) Farris confessed to building both IEDs during an interview on July 21, 1995. He described how the devices were assembled and drew several diagrams that further illustrated the design of the second drill bomb. For example, he designed the improvised initiator to function as an electrically initiated hot wire igniter.^{14,15}

- (U) A 1½-inch section of plastic straw partially filled with black powder explosive
- (U) An insulated multi-strand wire stripped down to 2 or 3 wire strands, folded over a small wood stick, and the assembly inserted into the other end of the straw
- (U) The insulated wire connected to the on/off switch of the drill
- (U) The improvised initiator inserted into one end of the pipe bomb

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Victim Operated IEDs – Louisa County, VA

(U) On April 17, 1998, the explosions of two VOIEDs injured multiple victims who picked up the seemingly abandoned items that concealed the IEDs. Both devices exploded at approximately 7 a.m. with the explosion scenes separated by approximately 5 miles. The almost simultaneous times for the explosions proved to be circumstantial since the unrelated victims discovered both IEDs at about the same time. Neither device used any type of victim enticement such as a note.

Mineral, Virginia, device

(U) John Thompson discovered a green tackle box lying at the end of his driveway after he returned from work at 6:15 a.m. Thompson took the tackle box into the kitchen of his residence that he shared with his parents. As Thompson and his father attempted to open the tackle box, the concealed IED partially functioned. Both Thompson and his father suffered burns from the explosion. Both victims avoided more significant injuries because the IED was not properly constructed and allowed the gas pressures generated by the deflagration of the smokeless powder main charge to vent.¹⁶ The bomber for this incident remained unidentified.

(U) Laboratory analysis of evidence collected from the scene identified the following IED components:¹⁷

- (U) Green plastic tackle box
- (U) PVC assembly consisting of a “Tee” fitting, 2 clean out adapters, and 3 end plugs
- (U) Improvised initiator consisting of 2.4-volt lamp and attached wires
- (U) 2 D-cell batteries connected in series
- (U) Single pole plunger switch
- (U) Alliant (Hercules) Red-dot® smokeless powder

Louisa, Virginia, device

(U) Sabrina Brewer and Dorothy Grooms discovered a flashlight in a Louisa Pizza Hut parking lot at approximately 7 a.m. Brewer exited her car and retrieved the flashlight. She tested the flashlight by depressing the flashlight on/off switch. The device functioned and inflicted severe injuries to Brewer. The bomber for this incident also remained unidentified.¹⁸ Due to the similarity of components used in this incident and the Mineral, VA, incident, the same bomber might be responsible for both bombs.¹⁹

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(U) ATF Mockup of Flashlight Device

(U) Laboratory analysis of evidence collected from the scene identified the following IED components:²⁰

- (U) Yellow and black plastic Eveready® 6-volt Utility Lantern
- (U) Pipe fitting assembly consisting of a pipe coupling and 2 end plugs
- (U) ¼-inch steel shot
- (U) Improvised initiator consisting of lamp wired to flashlight on/off switch
- (U) 2 Eveready® “AAA” batteries
- (U) Alliant (Hercules) Red-dot® smokeless powder

Conclusion

(U) These case examples highlighted IEDs concealed within a tool or a common everyday item and placed in a location where the victim would find it. The bomber depended solely on the victim's curiosity or greed for the item instead of a note, gift wrapping or some other enticement.

Reference

(U) The USBDC point of contact is ATF Intelligence Research Specialist Bradley D. Cooper at (202) 323-9699 / usbdc@atf.gov.

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Notes

¹Arizona Counter-Terrorism Information Center (ACTIC), "Two Explosive Devices Detonated in Glendale," S0120004, May 14, 2012.

²*Ibid.*

³Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC), "Flashlight IED Injures Two in Arizona," May 24, 2012.

⁴ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: CRUMPLER, Hosea, IN 765010-02-0047, Interview of Tamarla Crumpler, March 28, 2002.

⁵ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: CRUMPLER, Hosea, IN 765010-02-0047, Detonation of Suspect Improvised Explosive Device (IED), March 28, 2002.

⁶ATF, Laboratory Report, Title of Investigation: CRUMPLER, Hosea, Laboratory Number 02N0288(1), IN 765010-02-0047, March 28, 2002.

⁷ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: CRUMPLER, Hosea, IN 765010-02-0047, Detonation of Additional Suspected IED – Rechargeable Electric Razor, November 4, 2002.

⁸ATF, Laboratory Report, Title of Investigation: CRUMPLER, Hosea, Laboratory Number 02N0288(3,4), IN 765010-02-0047, May 15, 2003.

⁹ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: Ramona Drill, IN 93160-95-0024V, Interview of Paul Farris, August 24, 1995.

¹⁰ATF, Report of Interview, Title of Investigation: Ramona Drill, IN 93160-95-0024V, Interview of Ernest James Ortiz, March 23, 1995.

¹¹ATF, Laboratory Report 95S0074BCFL(1), April 5, 1995.

¹²San Diego Sheriff's Department, Follow Up Investigative Report, Victim: Richard Thomas, Case Number 95019361-R, April 21, 1995, pp.1-2.

¹³ATF, Laboratory Report 95S0074BCFL(1), April 5, 1995.

¹⁴ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: Ramona Drill, IN 93160-95-0024V, Interview of Paul Farris, August 24, 1995.

¹⁵ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: Ramona Drill, IN 93160-95-0024V, Report on controlled meeting between CI and Paul Farris on July 12, 1995, August 24, 1995.

¹⁶ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: Pizza Hut Bombing, IN 742209-98-0140, Detonation of two devices in Louisa County, VA, April 22, 1998.

¹⁷ATF, Laboratory Report 98N0289(1), July 21, 1999.

¹⁸ATF, Investigation Report, Title of Investigation: Pizza Hut Bombing, IN 742209-98-0140, Detonation of two devices in Louisa County, VA, April 22, 1998.

¹⁹ATF, IED Component Comparison, (IN 742209-98-0044, 742209-98-0140, 742209-98-0141), May 15, 2001.

²⁰ATF, Laboratory Report 98N0288(1), April 24, 2001.