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Mailroom Safety News

The Mail Center is the First Line of Defense

October 8, 2009

Greetings!

As always, thanks for your continuing interest. We publish this free newsletter because awareness of events and trends can contribute to safety and security. Past newsletters, going back to 2003, can be viewed or downloaded at our [Newsletter Library](#).

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Included within are news items that have been reported in "legitimate" papers. We attempt to avoid including opinion pieces/editorials/commercial press releases unless they have news value. If presented, they will be identified as such. Dates and sources are included with the item on our website www.mailroomsafety.us. You will also find other news items that, due to space constraints, were not included within the newsletter.

This newsletter is also available as a downloadable PDF document that you can print, save, or forward to your colleagues. To download the latest newsletter, just go to our website (www.mailroomsafety.us) and navigate to the Mailroom Safety News page. The link to the PDF is located at the top of the page. If you have any problems, just drop us a note at service@mailroomsafety.us

Marc Lane

Reward Offered In California Mail Bomb Case

Visalia, CA-Officials with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service announced Thursday a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or people behind a mailed pipe bomb that exploded at a Visalia business last week, injuring an employee and causing property damage.

Tips and information called into the Postal Inspection Service will be dispatched to the agency's lead inspector, according to an agency press release. Federal investigators and Visalia police continue to pursue leads in the case, but a spokeswoman for the Postal Inspection Service said she could not provide any details on the investigation's progress.

Aaron Mustin, the 31-year-old employee and co-owner

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of Cal-Air Cooling and Heating at 116 N. Valley Oak Drive was treated at Kaweah Delta Medical Center for burns to his arms and upper torso after the Sept. 8 explosion. He was later released from the hospital.

U.S. Postal Inspection Service tipline: 1-877-876-2455. Reference case number 1797512. Callers will remain anonymous.

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Poison Rival

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Florida Law Firm and Others Receive Envelopes With Suspicious Substance

Ocala - Ocala Police officials received a call at 2:24 p.m. Thursday about an envelope containing a suspicious substance. According to Wendell Rora with Ocala Fire Rescue, his agency responded to the law firm of Ayers, Cluster, Curry, McCall, Collins and Fuller at 21 N.E. 1st. Ave. John Fuller, an attorney with the firm, told officials he had opened a red envelope, with no return address, and found white powder inside.

Rora said his team suited up in HAZMAT gear and entered the building. They retrieved the envelope and brought it outside and delivered it into the hands of officials with Marion County Fire Rescue. MCFR tested the powdery substance on site for radioactive or explosive characteristics. The material tested negative. It was packaged and taken to the Marion County Health Department, which in turn will send it to a lab in Jacksonville.

On Tuesday, three people reported receiving similar pieces of mail. On Wednesday, a fourth person notified authorities that she had received such a piece of mail. All four people had a commonality in that they write letters to the editor to the Star-Banner. Fuller said he had not written such a letter.

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Sacramento Man Convicted For Sending Anthrax Hoax Messages

Sacramento, CA--Marc McMMain Keyser, who styles himself as the Paul Revere of an anthrax attack, was found guilty Thursday by a jury in Sacramento federal court on three counts of sending hoax anthrax letters and two counts of mailing threatening communications. The jury acquitted Keyser on seven counts of sending hoax anthrax letters and one count of mailing threatening communications. The jurors hurriedly left the courthouse without commenting. Pending sentencing, the 66-year-old Keyser, who resides in Sacramento, was allowed to remain free on \$25,000 unsecured bond with travel and other restrictions. He is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 30.

In testimony, Keyser told the jury essentially the same story he told to reporters at the time of his arrest. He said the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is ill-prepared for an anthrax attack and has failed to educate the public on what to look for and how to react to such an attack. Consequently, he said, it was his mission to take up the slack by warning businesses and individuals of their vulnerability. He acknowledged that in October he mailed approximately 120 packages containing a compact disc with excerpts of a book on terrorism written by Keyser. The CD was labeled "Anthrax Shock and Awe Terror." The packages also contained a small packet of sugar that had been relabeled with a biohazard symbol and the words "Anthrax sample." Keyser told investigators he intended the mailings to be "provocative," and he hoped to create a "buzz" generated by news reports that would heighten awareness of anthrax vulnerability and spur sales of his book.

"Only Mr. Keyser knew his mailings to be a hoax, not the victims who had the misfortune to open his packages nor the public safety personnel deployed to investigate," said U.S. Attorney Lawrence Brown. The mailings were sent nationwide to newspapers and other media companies, an assortment of individuals, and retail outlets, causing police, fire and hazardous material personnel to respond to the scenes. Two persons were transported to a hospital for screening.

The jury seemed to draw a distinction between media and retail recipients. It found Keyser guilty of sending a hoax and mailing a threat to McDonald's and Starbucks establishments but acquitted him of sending a hoax when his targets were media outlets, including The Sacramento Bee, Sacramento television station KCRA (Channel 3), the Sacramento News & Review newspaper, the Atlantic magazine, the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer newspaper and the Dayton Daily News in Ohio. The jury found Keyser guilty of sending a hoax to the Modesto office of Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa, but acquitted him of mailing a threat to that office. Despite Keyser's virtual confession from the witness stand, the jury deliberated five days before reaching the mixed verdicts.

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Missouri Man Charged With Sending Threatening Letter to Judge in Nebraska

ST. LOUIS - A Missouri man allegedly threatened to kill a federal judge in Nebraska. Jeffery Phillips, 37, of Ste. Genevieve, is charged with mailing a threatening letter to a judge on the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. Federal prosecutors say Phillips mailed a letter to Judge C. Arlen Beam that contained a white powder. The letter, sent in July, said the powder was anthrax and allegedly threatened the judge and his family. It was not clear what, if any, relationship the judge had to Phillips. Phillips faces up to 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and three years probation if convicted. Ste. Genevieve is 65 miles south of St. Louis.

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Report Of White Powder Leads To Evacuation Of Military Call Center In Dallas

Dallas, TX--An Army and Air Force Exchange Service call center building was evacuated this morning in Dallas after an employee in the accounting department reported discovering white powder in an envelope and having difficulty breathing. 8901 Autobahn Drive in Dallas Dallas Fire-Rescue and U.S. Air Force officials said investigators found no trace of hazardous materials in the suspicious envelope found at 8901 Autobahn Drive just south of Interstate 20 near Desoto. Many of the 250 evacuated employees waited in cars and under the awnings of nearby buildings to escape the rain until they were allowed to return to work about 9 a.m.

Fire spokesman Jason Evans said the employee who reported the incident shortly before 7 a.m. said she experienced a burning sensation in her eyes, nose and throat. Maj. Edwina Walton said the same employee and may have experienced an asthma attack. Evans said the package was marked "international," but he did not know whether it had been sent from outside the country. The package was not addressed to a specific individual. Officials said an envelope inside the package reportedly contained some dust or powder. It was taken away for further testing.

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Third Suspicious Mail Item in One Week Triggers Evacuation At City Hall in North Carolina

GREENSBORO - Part of the Melvin Municipal Office Building in downtown Greensboro was evacuated this morning after a suspicious package was found in the mailroom. Workers found the package about 8:30 a.m. while sorting through mail, said Jim Collins, a city of Greensboro spokesman. Collins could not say what was suspicious about the package. It was addressed to somebody in city government.

The city's hazardous materials team and its bomb squad responded to the city building. The heating and air conditioning units in the building were shut off, and the area near the mailroom was evacuated. Workers were allowed to re-enter the building later in the morning after the package was determined to be safe. Police are continuing their investigation of the incident.

Two similar packages were found on Tuesday: one addressed to Mayor Yvonne Johnson and another to the City Council. The packages contained letters and nothing hazardous, officials said. Greensboro Assistant Fire Chief Skip Nix said he was unsure why mail clerks have been tipped off to the packages but said they go through training sessions on a variety of things to look for that could indicate a safety concern.

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Former Postal Worker Pleads Guilty To Theft Of 30,000 Netflix DVDs

Springfield, MA -- A former U.S. Postal Service employee will be back in federal court in December for sentencing after entering a guilty plea to the theft of DVDs. Massachusetts prosecutors say Myles Weathers, who now lives in New York, admitted taking more than 30- thousand DVDs sent out by Netflix to Massachusetts customers during a one-year period beginning in January 2007.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Dineen Jerrett said an investigation by the Office of Inspector General zeroed in on the night shift at the Springfield branch and eventually targeted Weathers. U.S. District Judge Michael Ponsor says the maximum penalty for mail theft by a federal employee is five years in prison and a 250-thousand-dollar fine.

Under federal guidelines, by pleading guilty Weathers faces significantly less jail time.

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Florida Woman Accused of Hoax Anthrax Threats Against Sheriffs Office Waives Right To Speedy Trial

Sebring, FL--The Sebring woman accused of sending two letters containing a suspicious white powder to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office waived her right to a speedy trial at Tuesday's pretrial conference. Cally-Jo Richardson, 31, of 1400 Sunset Drive, is charged with two counts of possession of a hoax weapon of mass destruction and one count of criminal use of personal identification information. Her case was continued for another pretrial conference on Oct. 20 at 8:30 a.m.

The envelopes were sent to the sheriff's office on July 21, with one being addressed to Sheriff Susan Benton and the other to a detective. Forty employees were evacuated from the building after the letters arrived. Operations inside the jail and the 911 dispatch center were not disrupted since they are in a self-contained area. The powder tested negative for anthrax or any other biochemical.

A domestic situation appears to be the motive behind the letters being sent. Both were addressed in ink, with a Franklin Street return address and the name Louis Richardson listed. Richardson was interviewed at his home and ruled out as a suspect. He recognized the handwriting as possibly that of his estranged wife, Cally-Jo, according to an earlier sheriff's office press release. The defendant reportedly admitted to sending the two envelopes, and told detectives she and her husband were going through a divorce.

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Suspicious Letter and "Smart" Powder Prompt Evacuation at Kansas City Police Headquarters

Kansas City, MO--Kansas City police evacuated the homicide and robbery units on the second floor of police headquarters this afternoon, after an employee opened a letter that contained suspicious powder. No one complained of any medical symptoms.

The stenographer opened the letter about 1:30 p.m. and later told officials, who evacuated the employees about 2:20 p.m. They were allowed to return about 3:30 p.m. Police said the letter contained some powder under a piece of tape. The letter described the powder as "smart powder" and advised police officers to sprinkle the powder on themselves, according to an investigator who was evacuated from the floor.

Paramedics and members of Kansas City's homeland security task force responded to the building at 1125 Locust Street. Investigators from the second floor waited in a basement garage to be cleared to return to their offices.

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Canada Post Uses GPS Device to Track Down Postal Thief Working on Inside

British Columbia, Canada--Canada Post in B.C. used a GPS tracking device to help crack a case of internal mail theft from its Surrey and White Rock depots. Timothy Herbert Buxton, 53, of Surrey, a former Canada Post truck driver, will be sentenced next month for possession of stolen mail after he was caught in an elaborate sting

operation.

The case began with a customer complaint about a laptop computer that was mailed but never delivered. "That obviously was a concern to the customer, who then contacted us and our investigators got involved and we found out what the problem was," Canada Post spokesman John Caines told CBC News. In total, nine laptop computers that had been sent in the mail between December 2008 and June 2009 never arrived at their destinations. Canada Post investigators eventually called in the RCMP. "They had narrowed [their investigation] down to one individual," said Surrey RCMP Sgt. Roger Morrow.

According to a search warrant obtained by CBC News, members of a joint RCMP-Canada Post task force hid a global positioning system device in a packaged laptop computer they then placed in the mail. A delivery truck picked up the package at the White Rock Post Office and investigators followed the GPS signal. It indicated the package went to a mobile home in Surrey, not the location to which the package was addressed. Postal inspectors and Surrey RCMP then moved in and retrieved the package. Buxton was later arrested and charged. The mobile home was occupied by a friend of Buxton's, who claimed to know nothing about the stolen goods. Buxton pleaded guilty in September to possession of stolen mail and stolen property. His contract with Canada Post was terminated.

Canada Post recorded 85 incidents of internal mail theft in 2008, said Caines. "Even one piece of mail that is stolen or goes missing is important to us. I mean, people are entrusting us with their mail," he said. The RCMP said the post office has a good investigation system, and a relatively low incidence of internal theft. "When you look at the number of employees Canada Post would have, I think they have a pretty good track record," said Morrow.

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San Francisco Testing Digital Mail Services to Save Postage

San Francisco, CA-- Last week, the city of San Francisco sent its first letter to residents using Zumbox, a secure e-mail service that allows senders to contact people online using their street address, which regular e-mail doesn't do. If the experiment catches on with even a fraction of the population, San Francisco could save a chunk of the \$3 million it spent last fiscal year on postage and associated labor costs. Although the service typically costs 5 cents per e-mail, Zumbox is not charging the city. "If we can get 10 to 15 percent of the population to check their Zumbox, it would be huge in paper and cost savings," said Lawrence Grodeska, Internet communications coordinator for San Francisco's Department of the Environment. The other selling point is the environmental benefit: no paper to recycle. Last year, the city sent about 7.5 million pieces of mail, according to its mail department.

Zumbox is one of a number of services that is trying to reduce the burden of physical mail. Companies such as EarthClassMail and PaperlessMail offer to scan customers' unopened mailings. From a computer, users can then decide which letters they want opened and fully scanned or shredded and recycled. Zumbox, based in Westlake Village (Los Angeles County), drops paper from the equation altogether by recruiting companies and municipalities to use its service. Zumbox has also launched in Newark, N.J., and New Lenox, Ill.

But observers are split between praise for the promise of these services and skepticism about their widespread usage. Adoption of these services would depend a lot on filling a real need and having a good pitch, said Yale Braunstein, UC Berkeley professor of economics of information and communication. "All they really are are integrated visual enhanced e-mail boxes," he said. "There are two questions for all of

them: Do they have the right characteristics to attract users and do they have a financial model that makes sense?" Grodeska says the appeal of Zumbox is its connection to physical addresses. People can go to www.zumbox.com and check mail for their street address. "You just can't do that with e-mail. There's no geo- location targeting with it," he said. As such, the corner pizza parlor could use the service to digitally send special offers to a specific ZIP code or the city could mail water bills to the entire populace with the click of a button.

S.F. gets on board Last Tuesday, the city's Department of the Environment sent its first letter through Zumbox to the more than 400,000 addresses in San Francisco, reminding residents of the new universal recycling and compost ordinance. The city also sent the notice through regular mail, but Zumbox offers users the option of discontinuing paper mailings. On Friday, a Zumbox spokesman said in an e-mail that the number of Zumboxes claimed was not "meaningful or relevant at this point," but the company would report the numbers when they are prepared. In New Lenox, the city where Zumbox launched its services, 25 percent of people have checked their accounts at least once, the company said.

Michael A. Crew, a professor of regulatory economics at Rutgers, believes that if it were to catch on, services like Zumbox could place a real dent on the U.S. Postal Service, which has already been losing business to the Internet as consumers pay more bills and taxes online. "The attack is really close to home because it's based on physical addresses," said Crew, who has researched the Postal Service. "That sounds like it might be a winner." USPS saw a dramatic drop in physical mail from last year - from 202 billion pieces sent in 2008 to an estimated 175 billion this year. "As technology gets more secure and people become more comfortable with it, we'll continue to see a decline to physical mail," said Postal Service spokesman James Widgel. Widgel attributed this year's decline to the economic crisis. He expects a rebound in business once the dust settles. "Not everybody has computers or broadband technology," he said. "The Postal Service is still extremely relevant to society."

But with mounting competition, things are only going to get worse for the Postal Service, said George Van Horn, a senior analyst with industry research firm IBISWorld. "With their older technology and the kinds of legacy involved, it's an easy target for private industry to try and come up with better solutions," he said.

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UK Man Responsible for Mail Bomb Hoax Spared Jail For Tabasco Sauce Stunt

A GARDENER from Epsom who sent a hoax bomb to a pub in Ewell has been spared jail for what was described as a "practical joke gone wrong". Victor Pickston, 49, of Belfield Road, had been drinking in The Wheatsheaf in Kingston Road on June 15 and left with a bottle of Tabasco sauce that had been used as an ingredient in a Bloody Mary drink. Guildford Crown Court heard on Wednesday that a brown envelope was delivered to the pub the next day, containing the bottle of sauce along with a battery and a mobile phone, designed to look like a bomb.

David Castle, defending Pickston, said his client had become involved in a light-hearted argument with a member of staff at the pub regarding the bottle of sauce and decided to return it as a joke. "He has something of a reputation for practical jokes," Mr Castle said. "He wandered off with the bottle and the bar staff weren't too happy about this. "Tabasco has something of a reputation as being like dynamite, so he decided to send it back to them literally like dynamite. "There was no intent by him to give the package any real credibility. "He does have a reputation as a bit of a joker. He once made pies out of dog poo."

Mr Castle added that his client was a regular at the pub and never expected the package to be taken seriously. "It was addressed to 'Jolly Lynne, barmaid extraordinaire at The Wheatsheaf pub' and was marked 'Handle with care'," Mr Castle said. "When she opened the package her reaction was 'Oh my god, somebody's having a joke'."

Police and army bomb disposal officers were called to the scene, and around 20 homes in the area were evacuated as a controlled explosion was carried out. "It all got very much out of hand," Mr Castle said. "This was a practical joke that went badly wrong. "It didn't occur to him for one minute that anybody would take it seriously."

Pickston pleaded guilty on Wednesday to a charge of placing a hoax bomb with intent, and was sentenced by Judge Christopher Critchlow to a nine-month jail term, suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work. The judge said: "I am satisfied that what you did was a practical joke and it wasn't intended to cause the mayhem that resulted. "This was something that arose out of your particular character and your relationship with the staff at the pub. "If you are somebody that likes practical jokes I hope what happened here will tell you to be careful in future." Pickston was also told to pay £670 in prosecution costs.

Following the hearing, the barmaid who opened the package said: "I didn't know it was a joke at the time because he didn't put anything on the bomb to show that it was a joke. "I was a bit confused more than anything."

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Man Sentenced In Fake Hate-Mail Campaign Targeting Virginia Church

Petersburg, VA--A man who used his unwitting children, wife and lovers to victimize his church in a fake hate-mail campaign was sentenced yesterday to two years in prison. The term imposed against Frantz Cadet, 48, was twice as long as called for under federal sentencing guidelines. U.S. District Judge James R. Spencer said, "This case has been puzzling, to say the least, from the very beginning." He said the evidence showed Cadet used some of his six children and two women he was having affairs with to unwittingly assist him in his crimes; disrespected his wife; and abused the love and charity shown him by his church. "It's a long history of selfishness. . . . It's just hard to understand," Spencer said.

Cadet, 48, a political refugee from Haiti, was convicted by a federal jury in June of nine counts of mail fraud and one of lying to a federal agent. Authorities alleged Cadet's intent was to win assistance from the Southside Nazarene Church in Chesterfield County and to keep his job there. In 2005, more than 100 anonymous letters with derogatory statements about Cadet were mailed to members of his church. At the time, he was in danger of losing his janitorial job for poor performance.

FBI special agent Judy A. Sykes, a member of the church, learned about the letters from the church's pastor, Jerome Hancock, who made an announcement about them before a service. Sykes started a hate-crime investigation that led back to Cadet as a suspect. Among other things, testing by the FBI and an independent laboratory found the DNA of Cadet or some of his children on all 20 letters randomly selected for testing. Two women -- who knew nothing of each other-- testified that they had romantic relations with Cadet, who told them his wife was dead. They said they addressed a number of the envelopes used in the scheme after Cadet told them the envelopes were for proper church uses.

Federal sentencing guidelines called for a term behind bars of six to 12 months. In papers filed earlier in federal court, Cadet's lawyer, Paul G. Gill, concedes that, "the

evidence describes facts that are truly stranger than fiction. "The most unifying theme in this very unusual case is the idea of surprise, bordering on shock." Gill asked Spencer yesterday to reject imposing a term over the guidelines. He said Hancock, the pastor, said, "the impact to the church, as a whole, was minimal." But Peter S. Duffey, an assistant U.S. Attorney, complained that "this case is different. . . . The FBI spent years investigating a crime that didn't happen." Duffey asked Spencer to impose a sentence of 30 to 37 months. Members of Cadet's family and Hancock were in attendance yesterday for the sentencing. Cadet apologized to his family, the church and the court. After completing his sentence, Cadet will face immigration authorities and could be deported. Spencer allowed Cadet to remain on restricted release until he turns himself in Oct. 29.

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Terrorism Charges Stand Against Pennsylvania Woman After Attempt to Poison Rival

Philadelphia, PA--It's said that if something looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, the odds are it's a duck. Not always. And sometimes imitation carries its own hazards, as Carol-Anne Bond learned yesterday when a federal appeals court affirmed - under a federal chemical-terrorism law - her conviction for trying to poison her romantic rival. Bond, 38, of Lansdale, was arrested by federal authorities in June 2007 and charged under a 1998 chemical-weapons law for applying highly toxic chemicals on the mailbox, car door, and front house door of a close friend and romantic rival, Myrlinda Haynes. Haynes had had a baby fathered by Bond's husband, Clifford.

Bond's attorney, Robert E. Goldman, had argued that Bond's messy personal situation did not justify federal charges under the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act of 1998. The law, he said, was meant to prosecute terrorists - not scorned spouses. But in a case it described as one of "first impression," a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit ruled unanimously that Bond had used her expertise as a microbiologist to obtain chemicals not available to the lay person from her job at Rohm & Haas' Spring House Technical Center.

Judge Thomas L. Ambro wrote that "it is unquestionable that Bond's special skill influenced her decision to use toxic chemicals as her weapon of revenge." "Poisoning one's rivals, of course, is nothing new," Ambro continued. "But attempting to do so through the systematic application of 10-chloro-10H-phenoxarsine is not an approach typically taken by members of the general public. . . . It reflects the plan and actions of an individual trained in the use of biocidal chemicals." Ambro wrote that the chemicals "have the rare ability to cause toxic harm to individuals through minimal topical contact."

According to court records, Bond tried 24 times to poison Haynes, but - except for one chemical burn to a thumb - Haynes noticed the chemicals and avoided harm. Haynes complained to authorities, and postal inspectors set up surveillance on her house. Bond was seen near Haynes' house and car and opening up her mailbox. The investigation linked the chemicals found on Haynes' property to four pounds of chemicals missing from Rohm & Haas. Bond pleaded guilty under an agreement that let her appeal the constitutionality of the 1998 law's use in her case. She is serving a six-year term at the federal prison at Hazelton, W.Va. The appellate court rejected Bond's argument that her prosecution violated the Constitution's 10th Amendment separation of federal and state government authorities.

Goldman, who could not be reached for comment about a further appeal, argued that Bond's arrest "signals a massive and unjustifiable expansion of federal law enforcement into [the] state-regulated domain" and pulls citizens into a federal

criminal area "not properly the subject of federal prosecutors." But the court held that Bond, as an individual, did not have legal standing to challenge the 1998 law under the 10th Amendment. And considering Bond's expertise, Ambro added, the federal prosecutor's use of the law was not a stretch: "Over a period of eight months, Bond researched, stole, and deployed highly toxic chemicals with the intent of harming Haynes. Any one of her attacks could have delivered a lethal chemical dose to Haynes or her then-infant child. Bond's actions thus clearly constituted unlawful possession and use of a chemical weapon."

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Two People Charged With Mail Theft From Collection Boxes in California

Merced, CA -- Two people were taken into custody earlier this month on suspicion of stealing mail from collection boxes in the Dos Palos area. Dos Palos police say the suspects may face even more charges, after additional evidence was discovered this week. Rickey Vega, 38, of Kerman, and Amanda Cervantes, 26, of Fresno, were arrested on Sept. 4. Dos Palos Police Chief Barry Mann said he became suspicious after noticing a blue Kia parked for an extended period of time around 3:15 a.m. near collection boxes, not far from Dos Palos police headquarters in the 1500 block of Golden Gate Avenue.

Mann notified Officer Cliff Battles about the car. After questioning Vega, who was in the driver's seat, Battles learned the suspect's driver's license was suspended. Mann said Cervantes was seated in the rear seat behind Vega during the incident. Police took possession of the car and searched inside, finding outgoing mail from Dos Palos and the Madera area, Mann said. The officer also found Venetian blinds inside the car, and the blinds had a sticky substance on one end. Investigators believe the suspects were using the blinds to fish letters out of the mailbox. He said the envelopes found inside the car also contained the same sticky substance. Mann said he believes the suspects were looking for envelopes containing money orders or checks.

Mann said criminals often target mail collection boxes to commit identity theft crimes. "This is a real easy way to victimize a lot of people. It can go on for months and result in thousands of dollars in losses," Mann said. Mann said his department is also working with Fresno police in the investigation. He said Fresno police searched locations this week in Fresno connected to the case, finding more stolen mail. As a result, the suspects could face more charges. Due to the nature of the alleged crimes, the pair could also face federal charges. Mann said the U.S. Postal Inspection Service was notified, and has since launched its own investigation.

Vega has tattoos that are consistent with the Fresno Bulldogs criminal street gang, Mann said. The pair were booked into Merced County Jail on mail fraud, receiving stolen property and other charges. Cervantes bailed out of jail not long after her arrest. Vega is being held in lieu of \$50,000 bail.

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2nd Suspicious Envelope Sent To Seattle Newspaper

SEATTLE - For the second day in a row, a hazardous materials team has gone to The Seattle Times after a suspicious envelope was found. Seattle Fire Department spokeswoman Dana Vander Houwen says a newspaper employee was briefly isolated Tuesday afternoon, but the envelope wasn't opened and was turned over to the FBI.

On Monday, a similar envelope containing an unidentified powder and a threatening letter was found at the newspaper, also causing the hazardous materials team to

respond. Vander Houwen says the material in that envelope was determined not to be hazardous. Vander Houwen initially said the second envelope also contained a powder, but later said she misspoke. FBI spokeswoman Robbie Burroughs says the agency is analyzing the contents of both envelopes. She says a letter also was found in the second envelope, but she doesn't know its contents.

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California Pipe Bomber Pleads Guilty to WMD Charge

San Diego--A woman accused of detonating pipe bombs at a federal courthouse last year in California and plotting other bombings pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction, the U.S. Justice Department announced. Rachele Lynette Carlock was charged alongside Ella Louise Sanders and Eric Reginald Robinson, both of whom had already pleaded guilty to the same charge.

"The bombs detonated at the [Schwartz] Federal Courthouse in San Diego posed a serious threat not only to people and property at the courthouse, but to citizens passing by. This prosecution serves as a reminder that the law imposes very stern penalties for the unlawful use of bombs, explosives or other destructive devices," U.S. Attorney Karen Hewitt said in a statement. Sanders' sentencing is set for Nov. 23, Robinson's sentencing is slated for Feb. 16, 2010 and Carlock's sentencing is scheduled for March 29, 2010

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German Neo-Nazis Held For Pre-Vote Hate Mail

Berlin, Germany--Police said on Wednesday they had raided the Berlin headquarters of Germany's neo-Nazi NPD party after it sent racist letters to ethnic minority candidates in this weekend's election, telling them to "go home." A spokesperson for Berlin prosecutors confirmed they had launched an investigation over suspected incitement to racial hatred.

The letters, signed by an "officer for the deportation of foreigners", were presented as a "notice" to candidates of Turkish origin ahead of elections on September 27. According to one recipient, Green politician Ozcan Mutlu, the two-paged letter contained a "five-point plan" for "moving foreigners gradually back to their home countries."

The letters sparked outrage from mainstream politicians who called for renewed efforts to outlaw the NPD, which has no seats in the national parliament but is represented in two of Germany's powerful regional assemblies. The NPD is on the verge of bankruptcy and has next to no chance of winning a seat in Sunday's election, polls show.

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Race Hate Mail Sparks UK Police Hunt For Elderly Writer

Hampshire, England--Police are hunting an elderly letter writer responsible for sending more than 50 racially abusive letters to people across the country, including the prime minister. The letters, some sexually explicit in content, have been sent to schools, hospitals, mosques, universities, doctors' surgeries and private individuals, leaving some recipients "extremely distressed". According to Hampshire police, which is heading the investigation, the letters are all pro-English in content and racially inflammatory, with many appearing to have been sent in response to Daily Mail articles. All the letters are offensive and racist against a wide variety of nationalities

and cultures.

Detective Inspector Donna Goff said nearly all the letters were postmarked Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, and had been sent to addresses across England and Scotland during the past two years. Similarities between the letters made it likely they had come from the same author. "The cursive script used in some of the letters indicates that it may be the writing of an older person. Repeat phrases used also indicate this, especially reference to 'working for 50 years' and regular reference to pensions." The letters regularly express anti-BBC views and accuse the corporation of racial bias, with the Scottish parliament and system also a regular target for abuse. Commonly used phrases in the text include "English parliament", "Exit Europe", "repatriation" and "BBC shutdown". Clippings from the Daily Mail have been included in many envelopes, which often also include cartoon drawings. "We are hoping that someone will recognise the handwriting, or the particularly distinctive style of illustration used in many of the letters," Goff said.

One of the letters was sent to Gordon Brown's constituency office in Fife in April. The most recent was posted to a private address in Havant, Hampshire, in July. Goff said police had taken hundreds of statements, and hundreds of articles had been examined for fingerprints and DNA. Various forces had already started their own investigations into the letters but Hampshire police has now taken control of the inquiry, codenamed Operation Heron. Officers in Hampshire have been liaising with colleagues in Fife, Strathclyde, Lothian & Borders, Derbyshire, Merseyside, Lincolnshire and Bedfordshire, and the investigation is being assisted by the National Domestic Extremism Team.

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Feds Investigating Suspicious Powder Sent To State House in South Carolina

COLUMBIA, SC- Things are more or less back to normal at the State House after state and federal agents descended on the complex Tuesday when a suspicious powder was found in an envelope. FBI, SLED and counter-terrorism agents, as well as a Columbia Fire Department Hazardous Materials team surrounded the Wade Hampton Building for much of the afternoon, and closed Sumter Street between Pendleton and Senate streets. Department of Public Safety spokesman Sid Gaulden said a staffer in a Wade Hampton Building mail room found the envelope at 10:30am Tuesday. Columbia Deputy Fire Chief Aubrey Jenkins said when the staffer opened the envelope, a powder came out. Officials say the staffer immediately notified a SLED agent on the governor's detail, who notified the Bureau of Protective Services and called in the other agencies. "They immediately isolated that floor of this building, turned the air handler units off and notified the proper people," said Jenkins.

So far officials won't release the name of the envelope's intended recipient or its point of origin, saying that's "part of the investigation." The HazMat team and a military Civil Support Team arrived at around 11:15am, and went in through a back door of the building to retrieve the envelope. The powder was determined to be non-threatening, and no injuries were reported.

A conference room and the correspondence office of Governor Mark Sanford are located in the Wade Hampton Building, but the governor's actual office is located in the State House. So far, officials have not confirmed whether the governor's correspondence office is the mail room where the envelope was found. Among the other offices in the Wade Hampton Building are those of Treasurer Converse Chellis, Agricultural Commissioner Hugh Weathers and Comptroller Richard Eckstrom. Sanford has been traveling Tuesday, and was not at the State House.

A second suspicious package closed Laurel Street between Assembly and Lincoln early

Tuesday morning. The package was found at the Strom Thurmond Federal Building just after 6:30am, but everything was cleared and streets were re-opened. Investigators have not said whether the two packages are linked.

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Suspicious Powder Sending Employees to Hospital Identified as Alfredo Sauce

RIFLE, Colorado - Italian food does not usually garner the attention of local emergency response people. The Italian Mafia, maybe. But generally not the food. However, three emergency agencies responded to a call shortly after 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 6, to the Grand River Hospital and Medical Center after receiving a call from the district that two employees had been exposed to a suspicious white powdery substance found in an envelope.

The Rifle Fire Protection District and the Rifle Fire Department received the call at 9:10 a.m. on Tuesday saying that two employees had been exposed to the white, powdery substance, which was found in an envelope and opened by an employee in the billing department located in an off-site facility. The two exposed employees were taken to Grand River Hospital and Medical Center while the Rifle Fire Protection District, Rifle Police Department and the Glenwood Springs Fire Department responded. "Initially, we didn't know what it was so our actions were more precautionary," said Rifle Police Officer Aimee Wride.

Turns out that it wasn't anthrax - the substance that scared America in 2001 following the 9/11 terror attacks - which was found randomly in the U.S. mail. It wasn't an illegal drug substance such as crack or cocaine. No, this was something completely different. This was powdered alfredo sauce. Rifle Fire Chief Mike Morgan saw the humor in the outcome of the situation, but reiterated that the situation needed to be addressed as if it were a real emergency. "When you respond to an unknown white powder, you're hands are tied," Morgan said.

Just hours earlier that morning, the department had conducted a meeting regarding hazardous materials and how the various agencies would respond. And although they knew it probably wasn't serious, they treated this incident as a real emergency - which, if nothing else - allowed them hands-on training to practice their skills. "It wasn't treated as a training, but it was a good opportunity," Morgan said. "We like to err on the side of safety." Using an infrared detection device, the substance was ultimately determined to be a powdered alfredo sauce. No linguine or parmesan cheese were found in the vicinity. The two employees were treated and released.

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Other News Stories We Couldn't Fit In

Here's a sampling of other news stories that we didn't have room for in the newsletter. They can be viewed and read in their entirety on our website. Just go to the Mailroom Safety News page of our site: www.mailroomsafety.us

- Hoax Anthrax Threat Shuts Down Part Of Kings Bay Naval Station
- Christmas Mail Likely to Be Disrupted in UK Due to Royal Mail Workers Strike
- Suspicious Powder in Mail Disrupts Chase Bank in Illinois
- Expert Testifies That 2001 Anthrax Spore Coatings Not Unique
- Powder Triggers Scare at Des Moines University
- Scientific Panel Continues Study Of 2001 Anthrax Mailings
- Judge Rules That Man Accused of Post Office Bomb Threat Can't Defend Himself

- Behind The Scenes, System Sniffs For Biological Attacks
- ELF Strikes Again In Washington State, Alludes To Future Action
- Two Minnesota Teens Charged With Felonies For Homemade Bombs

- Postman Pleads Guilty To Stealing University of Minnesota Area Mail
- Postal Inspectors and Connecticut Police Investigate Suspicious Package Containing Brown Powder
- GAO Says More Oversight Of Biolabs Needed
- Georgia Hazmat Crews Investigate White Substance Found In Mail
- Britain's Six-Day Mail Deliveries Threatened By Strike
- "Prolific" Sacramento Mail Thief Gets 25 Years to Life
- Two People Charged With Mail Theft From Collection Boxes in California
- Two Office Workers Exposed to Suspicious Powder in Australia

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Mail Center Security Seminars Include Preparing for Powder Incidents and FMR 41 CFR 102-192 Compliance

Powder incidents have arguably become the most common threat to mail centers today. The procedures, policies, and practices discussed in our mail center security seminars are designed to prepare for all types of threats but we will place special emphasis on powders. The goal is to provide a measured response to powder incidents--one that protects the personnel and assets while avoiding unnecessary work stoppages and evacuations.

Our seminars (off-site or on-site at your location) produce good results that can be measured in increased awareness and improved mail screening regardless of whether mail screening equipment is in use or not. Full day or half-day seminars are available.

We also address strategies for compliance with federal regulations (FMR 41 CFR 102-192) and establishing systems and procedures that integrate best practices into the mail center security program. Here's the schedule of upcoming seminars for FALL 2009.

- Atlanta, GA - October 20, 2009
- Jacksonville, FL - October 22, 2009

- Philadelphia, PA - November 8, 2009
- Chicago, IL - November 12, 2009

[Seminar Information](#)

FMR 41 CFR 102-192 Compliance and Certification

We would be pleased to forward an information package to you that presents our 41 CFR 102-192 related services. You can use [t his link](#) to our website page and fill out an information request form. If you prefer just e-mail us at service@mailroomsafety.us and we'll get the information to you.

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