

Arizona Attorney General's Office / P-2016-2352
Michelle Bastian
PROBABLE CAUSE STATEMENT
FORM 4

In May of 2016, a known source told the Arizona Department of Corrections that Thomas Bastian was a radicalized member of the Islamic faith. In September of 2016 this same know source told the Federal Bureau of Investigations that he had knowledge that Thomas Bastian, Arizona Department of Corrections inmate #144716, was planning to create an explosive device in order to kill people, to include the prison warden.

The known source stated Thomas, who is currently serving a life sentence in the department of corrections for murder from 2008, converted to the Muslim faith while in prison and then became a radicalized. Thomas is married to a woman named (Suspect) Michelle Bastian. The known source provided information that Michelle was helping Thomas with this plot.

Further information from the known source revealed that Thomas had a plan in action to create an explosive device to either kill the warden or to plant it in a vending machine located within the visitor section of the prison. Thomas is currently housed in a maximum security unit; however, he was in the process of attempting to be relocated back into the general population. By moving back into the general population he would have had access to vending machines in the area where inmates meet with visitors. Records obtained from the Arizona Department of Corrections confirm that Thomas was requesting to be moved to a general population unit. Additionally, a transfer to general population would allow him to have great access to visitors. The known source indicated that his wife, during her visits with him, was going to furnish him the materials to carry out the attack.

The information provided by the know source was corroborated after a search of Thomas' cell was conducted by members of the Arizona Department of Corrections. Located inside the cell were the known terrorist publications, Inspire and Dabiq, distributed by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) also known as the Islamic State or Iraq and Syria (ISIS) respectively. The objective of these publications is to provide detailed instructions on how to commit acts of terrorism and to praise those that have successfully carried out attacks. Located within a stack of detailed handwritten notes on how to construct an explosive device were several pages from an issue of Inspire that contained information on how to construct a bomb out materials found in "your mother's kitchen." The detailed article gives illustrated step by step instructions on how to make an explosive device using rudimentary materials. The mail made it past prison security because it was labeled as "legal mail."

According to information provided from the FBI terrorist organizations are increasingly using homegrown violent extremist to attack civilian targets. In January of 2015 the first ISIL inspired attack occurred after ISIL began publicly calling for attacks in the West. Around the time the known source raised concerns over Thomas becoming radicalized, ISIL spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani publicly stated that ISIL supporters should target civilians in the West because of difficulties attacking military targets and to retaliate for the anti-ISIL bombing.

Based on the way the materials were sent and evidence located during a search warrant conducted at the suspect's place of employment and residence, by the Attorney General's Office and the FBI, it is believed that

Michelle sent these articles to Thomas disguised them as legal papers. Several letters from Thomas were located at Michelle's residence and her place of employment. A number of the letters indicate that she should send him radicalized materials. One of the letters requests that she send him the latest versions of Inspire and Dabiq. Another letter requests that she send him a copy of the "Al Qaeda Training Manual" and "44 ways of Supporting Jihad" in addition to other materials that reference and discuss jihad. Several of the requested items listed had a check mark next to them. Thomas' cell was search again new issues of Inspire and Dabiq were located. In addition to other terrorism related materials the publication "44 ways of Supporting Jihad" was also located. On the letter located that requests this specific publication there was a check mark next to it. Additionally, a handwritten note sent from Tomas was located providing a legend for coded terminology. One of the codes listed was "Legal Mail = AT&T." This is consistent with materials sent being disguised as legal mail.

Recorded phone calls between Thomas and Michelle were obtained from the Arizona Department of Corrections and subsequently reviewed. During one of the calls, Michelle states she sent the "articles" to Thomas. It is believed that Michelle is referencing terrorism related publications. She also mentions that she knows that Thomas is a supporter of ISIS.

Michelle has a past criminal history where she was convicted of theft and sentenced to just under two years in the Arizona Department of Corrections. While serving her prison sentence, she was disciplined for smuggling contraband. In 2009, Thomas was investigated by the Scottsdale Police Department for threatening the lives of the law enforcement personnel who assisted in his murder conviction and threatened the use of explosives.