

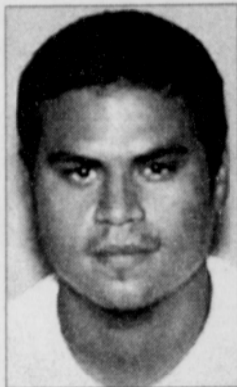


EL OBSERVADOR

Hispanic Arrested in 'Dirty Bomb' Plot

BY DONNA LEINWAND AND JACK KELLEY, USA TODAY

With the arrest of a former Chicago street gang member in a suspected al-Qaeda plot to explode a radioactive "dirty bomb" in the United States, authorities are seeking others who might have been involved, U.S. law enforcement officials said Monday. Abdullah Al Muhajir, 31, who officials say changed his name from Jose Padilla after adopting a radical brand of Islam while jailed in Florida, was believed to have been on a scouting mission for possible targets when he was arrested last month in Chicago, where he



Jose Padilla, whom U.S. authorities say changed his name to Abdullah al-Muhajir and joined Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

grew up. Al Muhajir was stopped as he tried to re-enter the USA at O'Hare International Airport after flying there from Zurich. He had been in Pakistan, where authorities working the case have arrested two unidentified Pakistanis. Authorities said that for much of the past month Al Muhajir,

like several other detainees in terrorism probes, had been held in the New York area while officials investigated them. Sunday, he was moved to the U.S. Navy jail in Charleston, S.C., authorities said.

U.S. officials provided few details on Al Muhajir's alleged path from Chicago's gang culture to al-Qaeda, but their sketchy portrayal of him reflects the increasing threat they say is posed by the terror network's efforts to recruit Westerners.

A Defense Department official said Abu Zubaydah, a top al-Qaeda official in U.S. custody, led U.S. authorities to Al Muhajir—possibly to try to sow fear in the USA by showing that al-Qaeda had recruited an American. Al

Muhajir met Zubaydah in Afghanistan last year and then traveled to Pakistan, where he studied how to assemble a radioactive bomb at an al-Qaeda safe house in Lahore, a senior U.S. law enforcement official said. Weeks later, Al Muhajir met with senior al-Qaeda leaders in Karachi.

The dirty bomb plot was in its initial stages and did not have a target, although Al Muhajir has "indicated some knowledge of the Washington, D.C., area," Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said Monday. Intelligence sources said Chicago also might have been a potential target. A senior U.S. law enforcement official said part of the plot involved attacking hotels and gas stations with conventional explosives.

Mortgage Turns Sour for Portland Investor



continued from Metro

ACORN, a national neighborhood advocacy group, contacted Frunchess to let her know she was not alone.

ACORN accuses Household Beneficial of targeting African Americans with higher interest rates and has filed a national class action lawsuit that covers \$45 billion in claims, nationally and \$800 million in Oregon alone.

The suit accuses Household Beneficial of deliberately misleading customers about the terms and conditions of loans that exceed the actual value of the homes in question.

Household Beneficial spokesman Megan Hayden disputes the claims.

"It's always been and always will be our policy to openly disclose the rates of our loans," Hayden said.

For example, she said in the

Frunchess case, loan documents were signed by Frunchess that disclosed the terms of the loan.

Hayden said the loan agreement also allowed for a 3 day cooling off period in which the mortgage could be cancelled.

Hayden said accusations of race discrimination were particularly offensive, claiming the company is color blind, basing its lending on credit history and collateral only.

She said documents show the loan was priced appropriately given Frunchess' credit history and qualification as only a sub-prime borrower.

Company officials from Spartan declined comment.

Meanwhile, Frunchess said she is so saddled by the exorbitant payments. She is attempting to sell the house for only \$119,000.

Hispanic Chamber Hires New Business Coordinator

The Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber appointed Gladys Romero as the new Business Development Coordinator.

Romero will contact and assist Hispanic businesses in the metropolitan area. She will assess their business needs, provide direct technical business services and coordinate additional services with other business service providers like the Small Business Development Centers, the Portland Development Commission, and the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department.

Before moving to Portland, Romero worked for the U.S. Census Bureau as the Program Coordinator/Partnership Specialist at the Seattle Regional Office. She developed and implemented a minority outreach program throughout the region. Romero also served as the Project Director of the Minority Business Development Agency in Seattle. As a result of her work with minority businesses, Romero was recognized as Washington's Minority Business Advocate of the Year.

For more information about the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce in Oregon, you can go online to www.hmccoregon.com.



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Tri-Met, the region's progressive public transit agency, has an excellent opportunity for a Planner I in the Capital Projects & Facilities Division. This position will provide planning and project management support for the District's bus stops and facilities development program. Duties include research, field investigation, documentation and technical analysis, developing design improvements and alternate project site plans, and participation in major planning studies and projects.

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