

Bomb-plot suspect pleads not guilty

DNA ALLEGEDLY LINKS HIM TO SPOKANE CASE



Kevin William Harpham was said to be a neo-Nazi member in '04.

BY MIKE CARTER
Seattle Times staff reporter

SPOKANE — A Stevens County man accused of planting a bomb along the route of Spokane's Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade in January pleaded not guilty Wednesday afternoon to two federal charges, including one that could result in a life sentence. Making a brief appearance in U.S. District Court in Spokane, Kevin William Harpham was arraigned on charges of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction and one count of knowingly possessing an improvised explosive device. The weapon-of-mass-

destruction charge carries a penalty of up to life in prison. Dressed in a white Spokane County jail jumpsuit and ankle shackles, Harpham answered several questions from Magistrate Judge Cynthia Imbrogno, indicating he understood the charges. He said "not guilty" when asked how Imbrogno did not set a trial date. A federal grand jury on Tuesday indicted Harpham on the charges. Harpham, 36, was arrested March 9 by the FBI near his home in the small, rural community of Addy, about 55 miles northwest of Spokane.

He is accused of leaving a backpack containing a rat-poison-laced bomb on a bench along the route of the Jan. 17 parade in downtown Spokane. The backpack was found by three city sanitation workers 40 minutes before the start of the parade. A source familiar with the investigation said authorities linked Harpham to the bomb through DNA and the purchases of bomb components, including a remote car starter and other electronics. Documents outlining the government's evidence against Harpham remain sealed. U.S. Attorney

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Attorney General Eric Holder. Harpham's attorney, Federal Public Defender Roger Reven, told reporters at a news conference Wednesday that the charges were serious and that "there is always the possibility of additional charges."

Harpham was a member of the neo-Nazi National Alliance in late 2004, according to Mark Potok, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Potok, whose Alabama-based office tracks hate groups in the United States, said it was not known when Harpham joined or whether he was still a member. Harpham, who was stationed at Fort Lewis when he was in the Army from June 1996 to February 1999, is unemployed.

Information from Seattle Times archives and The Associated Press is included in this report.