

# Chicago police frame antiwar activists on “terrorism” charges

By Patrick Martin  
21 May 2012

A total of five men have been arrested in Chicago and charged with planning to make bombs or Molotov cocktails to use during the NATO summit, Chicago police officials have announced.

The bogus character of the charges is demonstrated by the fact that the five men are charged for three separate incidents, linked only by the involvement of two undercover police provocateurs, who instigated or concocted each of the supposed “terrorist” plots.

Defense attorneys said the two provocateurs, a man and a woman, went by the nicknames “Mo” and “Gloves,” and had made many contacts among the activists organizing protests at the NATO summit May 20-21.

National Lawyers Guild attorney Sarah Gelsomino told the press that the two had steered all five of the arrested men into activities that led to their arrests. She said that “Mo” and “Gloves” began associating with anti-NATO protest organizers in early May, and that many activists were now afraid that these casual contacts could lead to their arrest.

The first set of terrorism charges was revealed Saturday, when Chicago police announced that three men arrested Wednesday would be charged with conspiracy to commit terrorism, possession of an explosive or incendiary device, and providing material support to terrorism, in connection with an alleged plan to attack the NATO conference.

The three men are Brian Church, 20, of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Brent Vincent Betterly, 24, of Oakland Park, Florida; and Jared Chase, 24, of Keene, New Hampshire. All three were arrested during a police raid on a South Side apartment in which a total of nine people were detained. The other six were released Friday without any charges filed against them.

Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy claimed

police were responding to an “imminent threat,” and police officials told the press that those arrested planned to bomb the home of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the national headquarters of the Obama reelection campaign, and local police stations. Police spokesmen subsequently admitted that there was no imminent threat to either Obama or his NATO guests.

Both Emanuel’s home and the Obama headquarters were the target of peaceful protests during the week, in which hundreds of police were mobilized to confront demonstrators, and a handful of protesters engaged in nonviolent civil disobedience and were arrested. No protesters engaged in any acts of violence at either location.

An attorney for the three men told the Associated Press they are “absolutely in shock and have no idea where these charges are coming from.” The three are being held on \$1.5 million bond each.

One of the six others arrested and released, Darrin Annussek, an Occupy Wall Street activist from Philadelphia, told the press there were no Molotov cocktails or raw materials for incendiary devices in the apartment.

Annussek said that police never informed him of a reason for his arrest, read him his Miranda rights or allowed him to make a phone call. They did not even allow him to use a rest room. According to the Associated Press, he told reporters after his release, “There were guards walking by making statements into the door along the lines of ‘hippie,’ ‘communist,’ ‘pinko’.”

The charges announced Sunday are, if anything, even more flimsy. A 24-year-old immigrant worker from Poland, Sebastian Senakiewicz, was arrested on charges of making false bomb threats against a Chicago bridge or other target. Prosecutors told a judge that the

defendant had bragged about possessing explosives, but that a search uncovered none.

A second man, Mark Neiweem, 28, of Chicago, was charged with “attempted possession” of explosives or incendiary devices, although the actual offense seems to consist of writing a list of the ingredients needed to build a pipe bomb, including the name of a store where one component could be purchased.

Neither Senakiewicz nor Neiweem actually did anything in furtherance of the supposed “terrorist” attacks, and the sole evidence seems to be what they said to the two unidentified police informants, “Mo” and “Gloves.”

The National Lawyers Guild attorney Gelsomino said, “We have seen zero evidence,” and noted that both men had been arrested Thursday and held for more than 65 hours before arraignment, in violation of their constitutional rights. Senakiewicz was held on bond of \$750,000 and Neiweem on bond of \$500,000. They will plead not guilty at their arraignment May 23, their lawyer said.

Prosecutors admitted that the only connection between Senakiewicz and Neiweem, and between those two and the other three men arrested, was the work of the police informants.

Another defense attorney, Michael Deutsch, said the informants had engaged in entrapment by infiltrating the protest milieu and encouraging violent action. Unlike a previous effort by police provocateurs, last month in Cleveland, it is not clear that the antiwar activists who were arrested had actually fallen for the trap.

Even if the police informants’ testimony is taken at face value, the two men charged Sunday had done nothing except talk. As for the three charged Saturday, published reports suggest that the so-called bomb-making equipment was actually a home-brewing kit to make beer.

These arrests of protesters on the basis of police provocation have aroused widespread outrage. More than a thousand people assembled at an evening protest against the first round of “terrorism” charges Saturday.

Occupy Chicago issued a statement demanding “the immediate release of the peaceful protesters terrorized by the Chicago Police Department in Wednesday night’s raid. We are getting a taste here in Chicago of what it’s like to live in a militarized police state, with

non-violent demonstrators targeted for expressing their First Amendment Rights and for standing up against the NATO war machine.”

There have been indications before the week of the anti-NATO demonstrations that Chicago police were preparing a provocation. At least one confrontation in which Chicago police threatened protesters and said they would “come looking for” them has been posted as a video on YouTube.

The raw footage includes one cop reminding protesters of the 1968 police riot against antiwar demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention, and urging “A billy club to the fucking skull” as the response to the upcoming march.

To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>