



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* NEW YORK

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 1, 2021

**NEW YORK CITY MAN AND ALABAMA WOMAN CHARGED
WITH ATTEMPTING AND CONSPIRING TO PROVIDE
MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIS**

James Bradley, a/k/a “Abdullah,” and His Wife, Arwa Muthana, Were Arrested at a Seaport in New Jersey While Allegedly Attempting to Travel Overseas to Join and Fight for ISIS

Audrey Strauss, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, John C. Demers, the Assistant Attorney General for National Security, William F. Sweeney Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), and Dermot Shea, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”), announced that JAMES BRADLEY, a/k/a “Abdullah,” and ARWA MUTHANA were arrested yesterday, March 31, 2021, at a seaport in Newark, New Jersey. A criminal Complaint was subsequently filed in Manhattan federal court charging BRADLEY and MUTHANA with attempting and conspiring to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (“ISIS”). As alleged in the Complaint, BRADLEY, who resides in the Bronx, New York, has expressed his support for ISIS and his desire to join the group overseas or commit a terrorist attack in the United States. BRADLEY and his wife MUTHANA, of Alabama, who has also expressed her support for ISIS, were arrested while attempting to travel together by cargo ship to the Middle East to join and fight for ISIS. BRADLEY and MUTHANA were presented before United States Magistrate Judge Debra Freeman in Manhattan federal court this afternoon.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss said: “James Bradley allegedly pledged devout allegiance to ISIS, expressing his desire to ‘fight among the rank[s] for the Islamic State.’ Suspecting he may be unable to travel, Bradley instead allegedly discussed conducting terrorist attacks along with his wife, Arwa Muthana, also an ISIS supporter, against the US Military Academy at West Point or another area university where Bradley knew military recruits to be training. But in an alleged attempt to evade the watchful eye of law enforcement, the two ultimately planned to travel to Yemen by cargo ship to fulfil their wish to fight with the terrorist organization. As Bradley suspected, he and his wife were indeed on law enforcement’s radar – he was confiding in and planning their journey for terror with an undercover officer – and their plans to wage attacks against the United States have been thwarted.”

Assistant Attorney General John C. Demers said: “As alleged, the defendants planned to travel overseas to join and support ISIS. The threat of terrorism at home and abroad remains, and the National Security

Division is committed to holding accountable those who would provide material support to foreign terrorist organizations. I want to thank the agents, analysts, and prosecutors who are responsible for this case.”

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge William F. Sweeney Jr. said: “Like others who followed a similar path before them, Mr. Bradley and his wife Mrs. Muthana have now learned their alleged attempts to fight on behalf of ISIS, inside the U.S. or overseas, instead begin with two pairs of FBI JTTF handcuffs and court appearances in lower Manhattan. Our goal is to interdict violence before it occurs, and once again I commend the work of the FBI-NYPD Joint Terrorism Task Force personnel who work 24/7 to keep their fellow citizens safe.”

NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea said: “James Bradley and his wife Arwa Muthana’s alleged determination to join ISIS and carry out terrorism against Americans overseas or here in New York is well documented in this multi-year investigation. It is yet another example of the effectiveness of the undercover operatives, detectives and analysts of the NYPD’s Intelligence Bureau working in seamless coordination with our partners at the FBI and the Joint Terrorism Task Force.”

As alleged in the Complaint filed in Manhattan federal court[1]:

BRADLEY and MUTHANA are ISIS supporters who attempted to travel to the Middle East to join and fight for ISIS. Since at least 2019, BRADLEY has expressed violent extremist views, including his desire to support ISIS by traveling overseas to join the group or committing a terrorist attack in the United States. In May 2020, BRADLEY stated to an undercover law enforcement officer (“UC-1”) that he believed that ISIS may be good for Muslims because ISIS was establishing a caliphate.[2] BRADLEY further expressed his desire to conduct a terrorist attack in the United States and discussed potentially seeking to attack the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York. BRADLEY explained that if he could not leave the United States because he might be on a terrorism watch list, he would do “something” in the United States instead, referring to carrying out an attack.

In June 2020, BRADLEY stated to UC-1 that his plan to attack a military base was something he really wanted to do and that it would be his contribution to the cause of jihad. In January 2021, BRADLEY mentioned to UC-1 another university in New York State where he frequently saw Reserve Officer Training Corps (“ROTC”) cadets training. BRADLEY stated that he could use his truck in an attack, and that he along with MUTHANA could take all of the ROTC cadets “out.”

In late January 2021, BRADLEY married MUTHANA in an Islamic marriage ceremony. Beginning before and continuing after their marriage, BRADLEY and MUTHANA discussed, planned, and ultimately attempted to travel to the Middle East together in order to join and fight with ISIS. In or about early March 2021, BRADLEY traveled from New York to Alabama to visit MUTHANA. BRADLEY and MUTHANA subsequently traveled together to New York in order to begin their journey to join ISIS. Thereafter, BRADLEY raised the possibility of UC-1 helping BRADLEY and MUTHANA get on a cargo ship to travel to Asia or Africa for the purpose of ultimately joining and fighting for ISIS. UC-1 subsequently put BRADLEY in contact with a purported associate who could assist BRADLEY in making arrangements for BRADLEY and MUTHANA to travel to the Middle East via cargo ship. In reality, the purported facilitator was a law enforcement officer acting in an undercover capacity (“UC-2”).

Later in March 2021, BRADLEY met with UC-2 and expressed his desire to travel via cargo ship and to “fight among the rank[s] of the Islamic State.” In a subsequent meeting with UC-2, BRADLEY provided UC-2 \$1,000 in cash as travel costs for BRADLEY and MUTHANA to take a cargo ship to Yemen. BRADLEY told UC-2 that he and MUTHANA both planned to be “fighting” after arriving in the Middle East. BRADLEY also told UC-2 that he had a dream that he had given “bay’ah,” an Arabic term meaning the oath of allegiance, to Abu Ibrahim al-hashimi al-Qurashi, the current leader of ISIS.

On March 25, 2021, UC-2 told BRADLEY that the cargo ship would be leaving on Wednesday, March 31, from a seaport in Newark, New Jersey. BRADLEY praised Allah and confirmed he and MUTHANA planned to travel on the ship.

On March 31, 2021, BRADLEY and MUTHANA met with UC-2 en route to the seaport. During the course of this meeting, MUTHANA confirmed to UC-2 that she was traveling to the Middle East to fight for ISIS. BRADLEY and MUTHANA were arrested as they walked on a gangplank to board the cargo ship. After MUTHANA was arrested, she waived her Miranda rights and stated during an interview that she was willing to fight and kill Americans if it was for Allah. Also on March 31, 2021, in connection with a court-authorized search, the FBI seized from a bedroom previously used by BRADLEY what appears to be a hand-drawn image of a jihadi flag commonly used by ISIS and a hand-drawn map of the Pakistan region.

* * *

BRADLEY, 20, of the Bronx, New York, and MUTHANA, 29, of Hoover, Alabama, are charged with (1) one count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, and (2) one count of conspiring to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, which also carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by a judge.

Ms. Strauss praised the outstanding efforts of the FBI's New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, which consists of investigators and analysts from the FBI, the NYPD, and over 50 other federal, state, and local agencies; the NYPD's Intelligence Division; and U.S. Customs and Border Protection New York Field Office Director of Field Operations (DFO) Marty C. Raybon. Ms. Strauss also thanked the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice's National Security Division, as well as the FBI's Birmingham, Alabama Field Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Alabama.

This prosecution is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew J. DeFilippis and Jason A. Richman are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Jennifer Burke of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

[1] As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Complaint, and the description of the Complaint set forth herein, constitute only allegations, and every fact described herein should be treated as an allegation.

[2] Communications, conversations, and statements discussed herein are described in substance and in part.

Attachment(s):

[Download us v. bradley and muthana complaint 21 mag 3574.pdf](#)

Topic(s):

Counterterrorism

Component(s):

[USAO - New York, Southern](#)

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