

# Moroccan National Wanted to Use Planes to Bomb Federal Courthouse, FBI Says

*El Mehdi Semlali Fathi was arrested for immigration violations.*

By AARON KATERSKY

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Andrew Harrer/Getty Images

The seal of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is seen on the floor at the FBI's Washington field o. [Read More](#)

April 8, 2014— -- A Moroccan national arrested in Connecticut on immigration violations wanted to “use airplanes, possibly toy planes” to bomb a federal courthouse and an unnamed university, the FBI said today.

Various hand tools and a small black carrying case were found in the Bridgeport residence that El Mehdi Semlali Fathi shared with someone he met while in prison in Virginia, authorities said. According to court records, the FBI had secretly recorded him talking about pliers, a cutter and wires in his bedroom that he claimed were the materials for a bomb.

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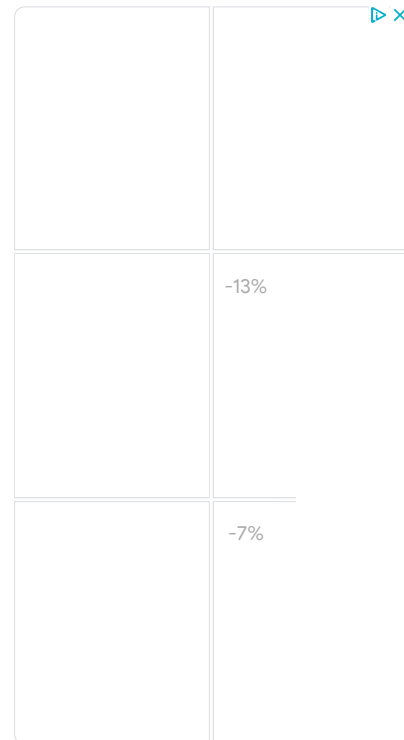
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Fathi has been in the United States seven years, now on an expired student visa, and is an asylum seeker, the FBI said. In five separate recordings, the FBI said Fathi “repeatedly confirmed his desire to bomb an education university outside the State of Connecticut and a federal building in Connecticut.” The specific locations were not identified.

“Fathi stated in the recording that he would use airplanes, possibly toy planes to execute the bombing,” Special Agent Anabela Sharp said. “Specifically, Fathi stated that he was going to use a plane, a remote-controlled hobby-type airplane, to deliver the bomb.”

Fathi allegedly boasted that he made a chemical bomb while in high school in Morocco and he was recorded talking about making pipe bombs and chemical explosives with materials “available in Southern California on the border.”

For the moment Fathi faces no terrorism charges, only immigration violations, authorities said. His student visa expired when he flunked out of Virginia International University in Fairfax and the FBI said he made false statements about his asylum application.

He is accused of researching issues in Morocco that he used to bolster his asylum case “so that everything he wrote in his refugee application coincided with the actual events,” Sharp’s affidavit said.

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