

# Georgia men charged with plotting to make ricin

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(Reuters) - Federal authorities on Tuesday arrested four Georgia men accused of plotting to buy explosives and produce a deadly biological toxin to attack fellow U.S. citizens and government officials.

The Justice Department said the men were members of a fringe domestic militia group and had planned to manufacture ricin for use in their attacks.

The men attended meetings starting in March where they discussed carrying out crimes, including murder, in order to undermine federal and state government, prosecutors said. The targets included local police, federal government buildings and employees of agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service.

The meetings were monitored by FBI agents with the assistance of a confidential informant, according to prosecutors. Two of the men also met with an undercover agent to discuss buying explosives and weapons parts, prosecutors said.

The men are Frederick Thomas, 73; Dan Roberts, 67; Ray H. Adams, 65; and Samuel J. Crump, 68. Thomas is from Cleveland, Georgia, and the other three men are from Toccoa.

At a meeting at Thomas' house in March, Thomas said he had enough weapons to arm everyone at the table and that he had compiled a "Bucket List" of government employees, politicians, corporate leaders and media members he felt needed to be "taken out" to "make the country right again," according to court documents.

"There is no way for us, as militiamen, to save this country, to save Georgia, without doing something that's highly, highly illegal. Murder," Thomas said during the meeting, court records show.

During a meeting in September, Crump said he wanted to make 10 pounds of ricin and disperse it in various U.S. cities, according to prosecutors. Authorities said he described one scenario in which the toxin would be blown from a car traveling on Atlanta highways.

Last month, Adams allegedly gave Crump a sample of the beans used to produce ricin, prosecutors said.

Ricin can cause death from exposure to as little as a pinhead amount. Most victims die between 36 hours and 72 hours after exposure, and there is no known antidote.

The most famous case of ricin poisoning was in 1978 when dissident Bulgarian writer Georgi Markov was killed when an assassin in London jabbed him with an umbrella that injected a tiny ricin-filled pellet.

"These defendants, who are alleged to be part of a fringe militia group, are charged with planning attacks against their own fellow citizens and government," Sally Quillian Yates, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, said in a statement.

"While many are focused on the threat posed by international violent extremists, this case demonstrates that we must also remain vigilant in protecting our country from citizens within our own borders who threaten our safety and security," she said.