

US prosecutors turn to Shay codefendant

By Matthew Brelis
GLOBE STAFF

With the conviction of Thomas A. Shay, federal prosecutors must now turn to his codefendant and onetime lover, Alfred W. Trenkler, a 36-year-old Quincy engineer.

Sources said the Shay case - with Shay's incriminating statements to law enforcement, television and jailhouse cellmates - was less difficult to prove than the Trenkler case will be.

Trenkler's family sat through much of Shay's trial in preparation for their son's defense.

"We were very disappointed obviously," Trenkler's stepfather, John Wallace, said of yesterday's verdict. "But Alfred's case is entirely different. We are still very confident and I am totally confident that he is absolutely innocent and had nothing to do with it."

A critical element for the government in the Trenkler case, which is scheduled to start Oct. 25, is to introduce so-called "prior bad act" evidence that he was involved in a 1986 bombing in Quincy.

US District Judge Rya W. Zobel refused to let the government introduce evidence of the 1986 bombing in the Shay case, but noted that her refusal did not automatically prohibit the government from using it against Trenkler.

Trenkler was charged with unlawful possession of an explosive in 1986 for allegedly building a bomb that was ignited under a Quincy fish company truck. The charge was continued without a finding after Trenkler cooperated with authorities in an unrelated case, according to sources.

At Trenkler's trial, the government, if allowed, will try to prove that the same type of electronic components used in the bomb that killed Boston police officer Jeremiah J. Hurley Jr. on Oct. 28, 1991, were used in the 1986 bomb.

In 1986, Trenkler allegedly made the bomb for Donna Shea, a longtime associate who had an ongoing dispute with the owners of the Capeway Fish Market and told Trenkler about the dispute before the bombing, according to court documents.

Shea is the wife of John J. Shea Jr., who was arrested in June 1991 for throwing two women into the ocean after they refused his sexual advances on his boat called the Wet Dreams when it was six miles out at sea.

During Trenkler's detention hearing last December, assistant US attorney Paul V. Kelly suggested through questioning that money may have motivated Trenkler to build a bomb for Shay.

Prosecutors alleged Shay wanted to kill his father in revenge for childhood abuse and to inherit part of \$400,000 the father stood to win if a civil suit he filed was successful.

Kelly said the government has yet to decide whether it will force Shay to testify against Trenkler.

"They can't force him to testify, and if they do he will commit perjury, because he doesn't know anything," said Shay's attorney, Amy Baron-Evans.

7/28/97

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