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TRIAL WPB MURDER ATTEMPT BOMB POLICE REACTION BB

**OFFICERS RECALL FRIGHT OF DISCOVERING BOMB**

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Dateline: WEST PALM BEACH

Two police officers crept into the bedroom on their hands and knees, cautiously looking for a bomb under the bed.

Lt. Chris Frey of the Boynton Beach Police Department switched on his flashlight and peered under the mattress. Officer Leif Broberg, a former infantry soldier, saw canisters and a pipe.

"It's a bomb!" Broberg cried.

The officers left the house on Southeast 34th Avenue and quickly evacuated two dozen homes in the Boynton Beach neighborhood. On Monday, the officers recounted to a jury the tense moments of May 18, 2000.

"I wanted out of that house," Broberg testified.

Ricardo Diaz, charged with planting the bomb under the bed of his girlfriend's husband, is on trial this week.

Diaz, 22, is charged with attempted first-degree murder and attempted first-degree arson. He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted.

His **attorney**, Bruce **Lehr**, acknowledged that Diaz built the bomb. But Diaz had no intention of killing anyone, the lawyer said. Instead, he built the bomb to serve as a "serious and stern warning" to Elmer Rivera, the husband of his lover, Nayades Ortega.

Diaz intentionally left open a sliding glass door in Rivera's house and covered the bomb in a white towel so that Rivera would be sure to see it, **Lehr** said.

"The only thing my client is guilty of is naivete and a little bit of not-too-brightness," **Lehr** told the jury.

But Assistant State **Attorney** Tom Lawson said Diaz confessed to building the bomb and knew it was deadly. In fact, Diaz was so proud of his creation - made from oxygen canisters and other items purchased at Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Radio Shack - that he bragged to detectives he "knew he did a good job."

Lawson said Rivera discovered the bomb when he came home from work and noticed a sliding glass door was open. The bomb was set to go off once Rivera sat on the bed.

Lawson said Diaz made the bomb because his girlfriend, Ortega, convinced him her husband was abusing her.

In May, Ortega, 26, pleaded guilty to attempted first-degree murder and attempted first-degree arson. She was sentenced to 18 months in prison.

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Caption:

Ricardo Diaz, charged with attempted first-degree murder, listens to testimony in Circuit Judge Richard Wennet's courtroom Monday. His **attorney** said Diaz made the bomb only as a warning.

Memo:

Ran all editions.

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