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**NEWS RELEASE
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**MAN CHARGED WITH UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF BIOLOGICAL TOXIN AFTER
RICIN DISCOVERED IN HIS LAS VEGAS HOTEL ROOM**

LAS VEGAS - - Federal charges have been filed against the man who was discovered to have possessed ricin in his Las Vegas hotel room in February, announced Gregory A. Brower, United States Attorney for the District of Nevada.

Roger Von Bergendorff, 57, is charged in a three-count Criminal Complaint with Possession of Biological Toxin - Ricin, Possession of Unregistered Firearms, and Possession of Firearms Not Identified By Serial Number. Special Agents of the FBI arrested Von Bergendorff this morning without incident, following his release from a Las Vegas area hospital.

“It is illegal under federal law to knowingly possess a biological agent and toxin of a type and quantity that is not reasonably justified by a prophylactic, protective, bona fide research, or other peaceful purpose,” said U.S. Attorney Brower.

According to the Criminal Complaint, on February 14, 2008, Von Bergendorff, while residing at an Extended Stay America (ESA) Hotel in Las Vegas, contacted emergency medical personnel and advised he had problems breathing. Von Bergendorff was subsequently transported to Spring Valley Hospital in Las Vegas, where he was declared to be critically ill and placed on life support. His medical condition has since improved.

On February 26, 2008, ESA personnel were preparing an inventory of Von Bergendorff’s property in the hotel room when they discovered several weapons. They notified the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), and a subsequent investigation of the hotel room by LVMPD detectives revealed two .25 caliber semi-automatic pistols, a .22 caliber Ruger rifle, and a .22 caliber Browning pistol with a silencer. LVMPD detectives also found in the hotel room an *Anarchist’s Cookbook*, a collection of instructions on poisons and other dangerous recipes, including instructions on the preparation of ricin. Ricin is a toxin made from the mash that is left over after processing castor beans for oil. The toxic effects of ricin occur because it kills body cells when it is taken into the body. LVMPD detectives also recovered ricin, castor beans, syringes, and beakers.

Subsequent FBI searches of Salt Lake City storage units rented by Von Bergendorff

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resulted in the discovery of castor beans, various chemicals used in the production of ricin, a respirator, filters, painter's mask, laboratory glassware, syringes, and a notebook on ricin production.

On March 7, 2008, tests conducted by the FBI determined that the material recovered from Von Bergendorff's hotel room in Las Vegas contained 2.9% active ricin. The preparation was characterized as "crude."

Von Bergendorff is scheduled for an initial appearance hearing at 3:00 p.m. today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Peggy Leen.

"The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and all of the local, state and federal partners of the Nevada Joint Terrorism Task Force are to be commended for their outstanding investigative assistance in this matter," said Steven M. Martinez, Special Agent in Charge of the Las Vegas Division of the FBI.

The case is being investigated by the FBI and Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, with assistance from the Nevada Joint Terrorism Task Force, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney J. Gregory Damm.

The public is reminded that a Criminal Complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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