

Yale Prof Injured by Mail Bomb

Anh Bui

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NEW HAVEN, Conn. — A mail bomb severely wounded a Yale University computer scientist Thursday, and the FBI was investigating a possible link to other explosions, including one that injured a California professor earlier this week.

David Gelernter, 38, was opening his mail in his office at 8:15 a.m. when the explosion occurred, said John Sennett, an FBI spokesman. Later, after the bombing was reported on radio, someone called in a threat to the medical center where Gelernter's brother, a Yale geneticist, works.

The bombing occurred two days after a geneticist at the University of California-San Francisco, Charles Epstein, lost several fingers when a mail bomb exploded at his home.

The FBI was looking for possible connections between the two cases and other recent bombings, both solved and unsolved, Sennett said.

Officials said the bombings bore the hallmark of the elusive "UNABOM," who targeted employees of the computer industry and university researchers for more than a decade before the bombings stopped in 1987.

The previous bombings killed one person and injured 21.

The FBI said authorities had to presume that David Gelernter was an intended target of Thursday's attack, although no reason was apparent why he would be singled out.

Gelernter, an associate professor and director of undergraduate studies in computer science, was the creator of a computer language that allows desktop computers to achieve the power of supercomputers. A colleague described him as an outspoken conservative.

Dr. Joel Gelernter, a Yale psychiatrist whose field of speciality is genetics, works at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in nearby West Haven. He is investigating whether there is a genetic component to alcoholism.

After the bombing, someone called the medical center switchboard and warned: "You are next," " said Louise FitzSimons, a VA spokeswoman. Agents checked Joel Gelernter's mail, but the hospital wasn't evacuated.

Authorities said they did not immediately know the type of parcel or explosive that was used in the bomb.

The blast severely wounded David Gelernter's abdomen, chest, face and hands. His condition was upgraded from critical to serious Thursday afternoon.

This week's other victim, Epstein, 59, was listed in fair condition at Marin General Hospital. The head of the medical genetics division at UC-San Francisco lost several fingers on his right hand and suffered burns, cuts and other injuries to his chest, abdomen and face when he opened a package bomb in his kitchen.

Epstein is known for his work locating a gene that may contribute to Down syndrome.

The Ted K Archive

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Chicago Sun-Times, page 8. <www.unabombers.com>

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