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Fugitive, charged in '83 bombing of sect's hotel, held in Englewood

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A fugitive charged with the 1983 bombing of a Portland hotel was in the custody of U.S. marshals Thursday, a day after police found a small, homemade bomb in his car in Englewood.

Steven Paul Paster, 36, formerly of Los Angeles, was arrested Wednesday on federal warrants charging unlawful flight, use and possession of a bomb and arson.

The charges stem from a bomb blast that set fire to the Rajneesh Hotel in downtown Portland in July 1983, said Jack Ballas, a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent in Seattle.

The blast reportedly caused \$180,000 in damages and occurred two days after Paster checked into the hotel, operated by disciples of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Paster, who suffered injuries to his hands, face, arms and torso, told police immediately after the bombing that he was opening a medicine cabinet in his room when the explosion occurred.

Paster was apprehended when police and federal agents stopped his car in Englewood and found a small exploding device in the back seat, said Sgt. George Egri of the Englewood Police Department.

A search early Thursday of Paster's yellow-frame house, 4198 S. Washington St., also turned up half a dozen weapons, including shotguns and at least one machine-pistol, Egri said.

Egri said Paster offered no resistance. He described the bomb found in Paster's vehicle as "a crude, homemade bobby trap" that could be mounted on a doorway and triggered to go off when the door is opened.

Paster's bond was set at \$50,000. A detention hearing before U.S. Magistrate Hilbert Schauer is scheduled for Monday.

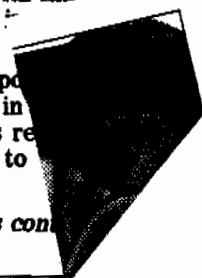
In Seattle, Ballas said Paster has been a fugitive since January 1984, when he failed to appear for trial on the Portland bombing charge.

The day after the bombing, authorities in Los Angeles searched Paster's home and found evidence he had been involved with making

Paster was charged and released on bail.

Egri said Englewood police said that Paster was living in Englewood. He discounted earlier news reports that ties appeared linked to Paster among East Indians.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



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