



National Enforcement Investigations Center

Case Results – Ryan Chamberlain

Domestic Terrorism Case Support

Analytical and Toxicology Capabilities

NEIC's Support:

- Forensics-based laboratory analyses accredited under ISO/IEC: 17025, General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories
- Method development for non-standard analysis
- Interpretation of analytical results
- Analytical consultations
- Toxicological expertise
 - Consultations
 - Assessments
 - Provide expert reports and testimony
- Experience providing environmental forensic support to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)

NEIC's Other Capabilities:

- Forensics-based field sampling and measurements accredited under ISO/IEC 17025
- Field inspections and investigations
- Statistical services
- CAA, 112r, CWA, EPCRA, RCRA, SDWA expertise
- Training

Background: Ryan Chamberlain, a media and political consultant, was the target of a nationwide manhunt in 2014 after FBI agents, investigating illicit online transactions on the “dark web,” found bomb-making materials, incendiary equipment, ricin, abrin, and cyanide in his apartment.



NEIC's support: In January 2016, NEIC was asked by the FBI to provide expedited analytical support to address claims made by the defendant in the Chamberlain domestic terrorism case. Chamberlain's defense attorney argued that the amounts of toxins found in his apartment were non-lethal and that the toxicity information based on animal studies was not applicable to humans.

NEIC developed an analytical method to quantify the percent of cyanide in liquid and solid samples and provided an analytical report to the FBI five days following the receipt of samples. Expertise from NEIC's toxicologist was also requested by the FBI to interpret the toxicity of the samples.

NEIC's chemist and toxicologist involved in this case were called upon to testify in a Daubert hearing to evaluate the admissibility of scientific and expert testimony requested by the defense. NEIC's chemist provided testimony concerning the cyanide analysis and the analytical results. NEIC's toxicologist testified that animal toxicity studies were relevant for ricin and abrin and the amount of toxin possessed by Mr. Chamberlain was lethal to humans.

Enforcement results: NEIC's laboratory and litigation support aided the FBI and the Department of Justice with the successful prosecution of this case. As a result, Ryan Chamberlain plead guilty to two counts including possession of a biological agent or toxin and was sentenced to 30 months in prison and 12 years of probation in April 2016.

How to obtain NEIC's support

NEIC provides environmental forensics support for criminal and civil enforcement cases. If you would like more information on NEIC or to request laboratory analysis, toxicological support, an investigation, technical assistance, or training from NEIC, please contact us at neic_project_requests@epa.gov. You may also contact your regional enforcement coordinator for more information on requesting NEIC's support on civil projects and EPA's Criminal Investigation Division (CID) for support on criminal projects.