

3rd man held in maim plot

Had threatened to harm child

By Randy Collier and Charles Kelly
The Arizona Republic

A Mesa man who neighbors said was deeply in debt and desperate for money was arrested by FBI agents Tuesday and charged with masterminding an extortion scheme in which he threatened to maim the child of a Paradise Valley man.

Frank R. Alber, 36, was arrested Tuesday morning when he arrived at his home in the 2700 block of South Santa Barbara. Agents had put Alber under surveillance for the past few days, the FBI said.

Alber was whisked away to FBI headquarters in Phoenix while agents searched his house. They removed several items, including a personal computer that agents believe was used to write an extortion letter to Paradise Valley businessman Marc J. Kaplan.

Kaplan said he was relieved by the arrest of Alber on Tuesday and of two other men picked up in the plot last week.

Kaplan said Alber had worked for him as a computer programmer in direct-mail marketing operations for three or four years until about a year ago, when Alber no longer was needed as a full-time worker but continued to work for

— See 3RD MAN, page A2

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Mon, Sep 30, 2019