



United States
Attorney's Office
Southern District of New York



PRESS RELEASE

California Man Sentenced To 3 Years In Prison For Making Threats Against Political Officials And Journalists Relating To The Outcome Of The 2020 Presidential Election

Monday, December 20, 2021

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District
of New York

Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ROBERT LEMKE, a California man who threatened members of Congress and journalists in connection with the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, was sentenced to 36 months in prison after [previously having pled guilty](#) to making threatening interstate communications. U.S. District Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein imposed today's sentence.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "Robert Lemke, refusing to accept the result of the 2020 presidential election, sent messages threatening dozens of victims, including journalists, elected officials, and their families, for the perceived offense of stating the facts. Rather than attempting to effect change through the lawful forms of expression that all of us Americans still enjoy, Lemke sought to quell freedom of expression, to intimidate and instill fear in others by threats of violence. Today, Robert Lemke was rightly sentenced to prison for his conduct."

According to the allegations in the Complaint, Superseding Indictment, and other documents in the public record, as well as statements made in public court proceedings:

From November 2020 through early January 2021, LEMKE sent threatening electronic and audio messages to approximately 50 victims, including journalists and politicians, targeting those individuals because of their statements expressing that then-President Trump had lost the 2020 presidential election. On January 6, 2021, the same day that individuals purporting to protest the 2020 presidential election gathered in Washington, D.C., and stormed the Capitol Building, LEMKE sent a series of these threatening text messages to journalists, members of Congress, other politicians, and their families.

As the attack on the Capitol Building was ongoing, LEMKE sent threatening text messages to a New York City-based family member of a journalist (the “Journalist”), stating: “[The Journalist’s] words are putting you and your family at risk. We are nearby, armed and ready. Thousands of us are active/retired law enforcement, military, etc. That’s how we do it.”

At approximately the same time that LEMKE was sending threats directed at the Journalist, LEMKE also sent threats to the brother of a New York City-based U.S. Congressman (the “Congressman”), citing the Congressman’s statements about the result of the 2020 presidential election. LEMKE’s text messages, which included a picture of a home in the same neighborhood as the home of the Congressman’s brother, stated:

Your brother is putting your entire family at risk with his lies and other words. We are armed and nearby your house. You had better have a word with him. We are not far from his either. Already spoke to [the Congressman’s son] and know where his kids are.

. . . your words have consequences. Stop telling lies; Biden did not win, he will not be president. We are not[] white supremacists. Most of us are active/retired law enforcement or military. You are putting your family at risk. We have armed members near your home. . . . Don’t risk their safety with your words and lies.

LEMKE acquired and used at least three different phone numbers and various electronic accounts to mask his identity when sending threats to his victims. LEMKE was not in fact affiliated with law enforcement or the U.S. military as he claimed in some of his threats. On or about November 7, 2020, LEMKE posted to Facebook: “Folks. Be ready for war. Trump has refused to cede. Evidence shows fraud occurred and the Supreme Court cases will be successful. We blockchained and watermarked ballots in 16 states. Trump will prevail.[] Spread this message. . . . FAITH my fellow Republicans. Do not give up.”

* * *

In addition to the prison sentence, LEMKE, 36, was sentenced to three years of supervised release.

Mr. Williams praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI's New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, which consists of investigators and analysts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), the New York City Police Department, and over 50 other federal, state, and local agencies. Mr. Williams also thanked the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California and the FBI's San Francisco Field Office for their assistance.

The case is being handled by the Office's National Security and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys Kimberly J. Ravener and Kyle A. Wirshba are in charge of the prosecution.

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