



Department of Justice

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Southern District of California

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**SAN DIEGO MAN FOUND GUILTY OF MAKING THREATS
AGAINST THEN-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE BARACK OBAMA**

SAN DIEGO - Today, in federal court in San Diego, United States District Judge Marilyn L. Huff found Walter Edward Bagdasarian guilty of two counts of making threats against a major candidate for President of the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 879(a)(3), announced United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt.

According to Assistant United States Attorney William Cole, who prosecuted the case, the evidence at trial established that Barack Obama was officially declared a major candidate for the office of President in 2007 and was assigned Secret Service protection. On October 22, 2008 – 13 days before the presidential election – Bagdasarian made two racist statements threatening gun violence against Obama on a public Yahoo! message board.

According to the evidence presented at trial, Secret Service agents traced the internet messages to Bagdasarian's residence in La Mesa, Calif. When law enforcement agents searched his residence, they found six firearms, including a .50 caliber rifle and .50 caliber ammunition. The evidence also established that, on the hard drive of Bagdasarian's computer, the Secret Service found evidence of two email messages from Bagdasarian to an associate on election day, November 4, 2008, with the subject header "Re: And so it begins." The emails discussed the need to get a Barrett model 82a1 rifle, and included violent and threatening statements suggesting gun violence.

United States Attorney Hewitt stated, "Our nation has a paramount interest in protecting the safety of the President as well as major candidates for that office. Today's felony verdict demonstrates that there will be very serious consequences for any person who violates federal law by making such threats. I commend the Secret Service for their work on this case, which should alert the public that threats of violence against the President or any presidential candidate will be thoroughly investigated by federal law enforcement."

Bagdasarian is scheduled to appear for sentencing before Judge Huff on October 26, 2009, at 9:00 A.M.

The case is the product of an investigation by agents of the United States Secret Service and is being prosecuted in San Diego federal court by Assistant U.S. Attorney William Cole.

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