

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Jersey Man Indicted for Threatening Employees of Latino Civil Rights Organizations

(More)

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TRENTON – An Ocean County man was arrested last Friday on a federal Indictment charging him with threatening employees of five civil rights organizations that work to improve opportunities for Latinos in the United States, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman and Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, announced.

Vincent P. Johnson, 60, of Brick, will make his first appearance on the 14-count Indictment in U.S. District Court in Trenton today at noon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Tonianne J. Bongiovanni.

Johnson was arrested by Special Agents with the FBI on Friday, Feb. 5.

The Indictment, which was returned by a grand jury on Feb. 4 and unsealed on Feb. 5, 2010, alleges that between November 2006 and February 2009, Johnson, using the internet username “Devilfish579” repeatedly sent threatening e-mail communications to employees of the LatinoJustice Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund; the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund; the National Council of La Raza; the League of United Latin American Citizens; and the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders. The indictment further alleges that Johnson intended to place the victims in fear of bodily injury and that Johnson acted because the victims were aiding and encouraging persons of Latino descent to participate without discrimination in activities provided by the federal and state governments.

According to the Indictment, among multiple e-mails Johnson sent, in November 2006, he wrote “[d]o you have a last will and testament? If not, better get one real soon.” Additionally, in January 2007, Johnson sent two e-mails to the victims, stating “[o]ur guns are loaded and we will take you out as well whether by the courts or by true fire power” and “[i]f the idiots in the organizations which this e-mail is being copied to can’t fathom the serious nature of their actions, then they will be on the hit list just like any illegal alien...actually, they are already on the list.” In February 2007, he wrote “I am giving you fair warning that your presence and position is being tracked...you are dead meat...along with anyone else in your organization.” In September 2007, he sent two e-mails, in which he wrote “my preference would be to buy more ammunition to deal with the growing chaos created by the pro-illegal alien groups. RIP [names] who are not the friends of our democracy” and “[a]fter reading the article below can you give me simply one good reason why someone should not put a bullet between your eyes for your actions that are promoting lawlessness in this country?”

The Indictment charges Johnson with five counts of making interstate threatening communications and four counts of interfering with the exercise of civil rights, each of which carries a statutory maximum penalty of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Johnson is also charged with five counts of using a computer with the intent to place a person in

reasonable fear of death or bodily injury, commonly known as cyberstalking, each of which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

In determining an actual sentence, the judge to whom the case is assigned would, upon a conviction, consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

An Indictment is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

Fishman credited Special Agents with the FBI's Washington Field Office for the investigation leading to today's arrest.

The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Benjamin J. Hawk of the Civil Rights Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Eicher of the District of New Jersey.

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