

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : Hon. Freda L. Wolfson
 :
 v. : Criminal No. 15-
 :
 MARTIN WOLMARK : 18 U.S.C. § 371

I N F O R M A T I O N

The defendant having waived in open court prosecution by indictment, the United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey charges:

1. From on or about August 7, 2013 to on or about October 9, 2013, in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere, defendant

MARTIN WOLMARK

knowingly and willfully did conspire with others to travel in interstate commerce with the intent to commit a crime of violence to further an unlawful activity--namely, extortion contrary to N.J.S.A. § 2C:20-5--and thereafter to perform and attempt to perform a crime of violence to further such unlawful activity contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Section 1952(a)(2).

Object of the Conspiracy

2. The object of the conspiracy was for defendant MARTIN WOLMARK and others to obtain money and other things of value from a Jewish woman and her family in exchange for obtaining a religious divorce from her husband by means of violence.

3. It was part of the conspiracy that interstate travel occurred with

the intent to further such unlawful activity.

Overt Acts

4. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect the unlawful objects thereof, the following overt acts, among others, were committed in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere:

a. On or about August 7, 2013, defendant MARTIN WOLMARK spoke on the telephone with two undercover FBI agents. One of the agents (“UCE-1”) purported to be an *agunah*; that is, a woman whose husband would not consent to a divorce and give her a document, known as a “*get*,” which is necessary to effect a divorce under Jewish law. The other agent (“UCE-2”) purported to be the *agunah*’s brother (collectively, the “UCEs”). During that phone conversation, UCE-1 spoke about her need to obtain a *get* from her purported recalcitrant husband (“the Husband”). In response, defendant MARTIN WOLMARK informed the UCEs that there were two ways to go about obtaining a *get* from the Husband, one of which was to “nail him.” Defendant MARTIN WOLMARK also told the UCEs that using coercion to obtain a *get* could be expensive. At the end of this initial conversation with the UCEs, defendant MARTIN WOLMARK recommended to the UCEs that they speak with his colleague, Mendel Epstein.

b. Shortly thereafter, on or about August 7, 2013, defendant MARTIN WOLMARK and Mendel Epstein participated in a telephone conference call with the UCEs, during which they discussed the possibility of coercing the

Husband into giving UCE-1 a *get*.

c. On or about August 14, 2013, Mendel Epstein met with the UCEs at his home in Lakewood, New Jersey to discuss kidnapping the Husband to force him to give the *get*. During that recorded meeting, Mendel Epstein spoke about kidnapping, beating and torturing husbands in order to force them into giving *gets* to their wives. In particular, Mendel Epstein talked about employing “tough guys” who utilize electric cattle prods, karate and handcuffs, and place plastic bags over the heads of the husbands to coerce them to give *gets* to their wives.

d. During the August 14, 2013 meeting, Mendel Epstein also explained to the UCEs that a rabbinical court (a “*beth din*”) would need to be convened to issue an order (a “*psak din*”) authorizing the use of coercion to obtain a *get* from the Husband. At the end of the meeting, at the direction of Mendel Epstein, UCE-2 made a payment of approximately \$10,000 to Mendel Epstein for Mendel Epstein to arrange for the kidnapping and beating of the Husband to coerce him to give the *get*.

e. On or about September 25, 2013, UCE-2 called Mendel Epstein. During that recorded call, Mendel Epstein and UCE-2 discussed a warehouse in Middlesex County, New Jersey (the “Warehouse”) as the location of the kidnapping and beating of the Husband to coerce him to give the *get*. Mendel Epstein and UCE-2 also discussed payment for Mendel Epstein.

f. On or about September 29, 2013, Mendel Epstein and Jay

Goldstein traveled from New York to New Jersey to inspect the Warehouse. Shortly thereafter, Mendel Epstein sent an e-mail to UCE-2 that the Warehouse was a “great” location at which to kidnap the Husband to force him to give the *get*.

g. On or about September 30, 2013, Mendel Epstein and UCE-2 had a telephone call, which was recorded. During that call, Mendel Epstein and UCE-2 discussed Mendel Epstein’s plan to kidnap the Husband and force him to give the *get*. Mendel Epstein also confirmed that the *beth din* would issue the *psak din* on October 2, 2013, after which UCE-2 would wire \$20,000 to Mendel Epstein as payment. Mendel Epstein also instructed UCE-2 to bring a check in the amount of \$30,000, and made out to Mendel Epstein, with him to the Warehouse on October 9, 2013.

h. On or about October 2, 2013, defendant MARTIN WOLMARK, Mendel Epstein, and Jay Goldstein convened a *beth din* at defendant MARTIN WOLMARK’s office in Monsey, New York. The purpose of the *beth din* was to issue a *psak din* authorizing the use of coercion to obtain a *get* from the Husband. That *beth din* proceeding was recorded by UCE-1.

i. During the October 2, 2013 *beth din* proceeding, defendant MARTIN WOLMARK asked UCE-1 to explain her situation, asking “Why do you have to be released from this marriage, even if your husband has to be coerced?” UCE-1 explained her situation and why she was desperate for a divorce from her husband, who refused to give her a *get*.

j. At the end of the October 2, 2013 *beth din*, Mendel Epstein asked UCE-1, in the presence of defendant MARTIN WOLMARK, about “the plan” for the forced *get* and whether UCE-1 knew the location and the timing. Mendel Epstein told UCE-1, in the presence of defendant MARTIN WOLMARK, that the plan to force the Husband to give the *get* was good, stating that “it’s at night, and it’s a weird place, it’s very good ... hopefully the patrol will not be out on patrol that night,” and further told UCE-1 that on October 9, 2013, she “should be out in public” among a lot of people.

k. On or about October 2, 2013, a payment of approximately \$20,000 was wired to Mendel Epstein by UCE-2.

l. On or about October 8, 2013, Mendel Epstein and UCE-2 met at Mendel Epstein’s home in Brooklyn, New York, to discuss the logistics for the planned kidnapping scheduled for the next day. That meeting was recorded by UCE-2. Mendel Epstein told UCE-2 that eight people would be present for the October 9, 2013 kidnapping and beating of the Husband, to include four “tough guys,” two witnesses, a scribe (a “*sofer*”), and a person to accept the *get* on behalf of UCE-1. Mendel Epstein further stated that he would not be present at the Warehouse on October 9, 2013. Mendel Epstein told UCE-2 that he would be in some public place, so that witnesses could confirm his alibi if he were later questioned by the police. Mendel Epstein directed UCE-2 to bring a check in the amount of \$30,000, made out to him, and that UCE-2 was to give the check to the *sofer* at the Warehouse.

m. On or about October 9, 2013, Jay Goldstein, Binyamin Stimler, and six other individuals (the "Kidnap Team") traveled from New York to the Warehouse in Middlesex County, New Jersey to execute the planned kidnapping of the Husband to force him to give the *get*. The Kidnap Team arrived at the Warehouse in two dark minivans shortly after 8:00 p.m. Upon exiting the minivans, some of the Kidnap Team members put on masks and entered the Warehouse office with UCE-2. The remaining Kidnap Team members walked around the outside of the Warehouse with flashlights. Over the next fifteen minutes, members of the Kidnap Team went in and out of the Warehouse office wearing disguises, including ski masks, Halloween masks and bandanas. While inside the Warehouse office, the Kidnap Team members discussed their plan for assaulting the Husband. Specifically, they discussed how they planned to grab the Husband, pull him down, tie him up, and take his phone, as well as where they would grab him and drag him, making sure to keep him away from the windows. Members of the Kidnap Team brought with them to the Warehouse rope, surgical blades, a screwdriver, plastic bags, and items used to ceremonially record the *get*.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.


PAUL J. FISHMAN
United States Attorney

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INFORMATION FOR

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