

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **LONG ISLAND MAN SENTENCED TO TWO TERMS OF LIFE IN PRISON FOR CONSPIRING TO MURDER FEDERAL JUDGE AND FEDERAL PROSECUTOR**

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Joseph Romano, 51, of Levittown, N.Y., was sentenced to two terms of life in prison for conspiring to murder the Assistant United States Attorney and the United States District Judge involved in his prior prosecution for fraud. The life terms of imprisonment were ordered to run consecutively to Romano's 15-year sentence for fraud.

As the evidence proved at trial, the defendant agreed to pay \$40,000 to an undercover police officer, who he thought was a hit-man, to kill the federal judge and prosecutor and also to cut off the victims' heads in exchange for a "bonus." In connection with the murder conspiracy conviction, the defendant also forfeited over \$200,000.

"In an attempt to subvert the justice system, this defendant attempted to murder a sitting federal judge and a federal prosecutor" said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "Originally sentenced to 15 years for fraud, Joseph Romano will now spend the rest of his natural life behind bars because of his heinous crimes.

In February 2012, at the federal courthouse in Central Islip, New York, Romano was sentenced by the United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York to 15 years in prison for engaging in an eight-year, multi-million dollar fraud involving the telemarketing of coins. The Assistant United States Attorney had successfully prosecuted Romano for this fraud. In August 2012, law enforcement authorities learned from another inmate at the Nassau County Correctional Center where Romano was being held that Romano was plotting to murder the United States District Judge and Assistant United States Attorney. The FBI then recorded a meeting between the inmate and Romano during which Romano described in detail his plans to torture, murder, and mutilate the United States District Judge and Assistant United States Attorney. During the subsequent investigation, two undercover law enforcement officers, posing as hit-men, met with Romano and Romano's co-conspirator, Dejvid Mirkovic, numerous times at locations on

Long Island, including the Correctional Center, to receive instructions regarding and down payments for the murders.

At the first meeting, which took place in August 2012, Romano offered to pay one of the undercover officers \$3,000 to assault an individual with whom he had a financial dispute. At Romano's direction, co-conspirator Mirkovic then met with the other undercover officer and paid him \$1,500 as a down payment for the assault. In September 2012, after one of the undercover officers showed proof of the purported assault of the intended victim - in fact, a staged photograph and an identification card - Mirkovic paid the undercover officer the \$1,500 balance.

Later that same day, Mirkovic again met with the undercover officer and relayed Romano's instructions to murder the federal judge and prosecutor. He offered \$40,000 for the commission of the two murders. In addition, Romano had Mirkovic instruct the undercover that Romano wanted the federal judge and prosecutor beheaded and the body of the prosecutor mutilated. Mirkovic further relayed that Romano would pay a "bonus" for those services. Over the following weeks, the undercover officer received \$22,000 in cash down payments for the murders and was promised payment of the final \$18,000 when the murders were completed. At the time of the arrests of Romano and Mirkovic on October 9, 2012, law enforcement officers recovered \$18,000 in cash and a loaded 9mm semi-automatic handgun at Mirkovic's residence in Lake Worth, Florida.

In March 2013, Dejvid Mirkovic pleaded guilty to conspiracy to murder and was sentenced to 24 years in prison in August 2013.

Today's sentence, imposed by United States District Judge John F. Keenan, was the latest development in an investigation handled by Special Agents and Task Force Officers of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Office, under the direction of Assistant Director-in-Charge George Venizelos. The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Marshall L. Miller, Una A. Dean, and Brian Morris of the Eastern District of New York, under the supervision of U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul of the Western District of New York.

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