



Department of Justice

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Afghan Man Sentenced to 106 Months for Conspiracy to Commit Kidnapping and Conspiracy to Commit Murder for Hire

LEXINGTON, Ky. - An Afghan man, known as “John” Sadiquallah, 32, was sentenced in federal court on Thursday, to 106 months in prison, by U.S. District Judge Karen Caldwell, following his convictions for conspiracy to commit kidnapping and conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire.

According to the evidence presented at his trial, Sadiquallah believed that the victim, L.E., owed him a substantial amount of money. After repeated attempts to try to get his money back, through persistent visits to L.E.’s place of business, Sadiquallah contacted Mahmoud Shalash, a local religious leader, to help him get his money back. Shalash had been working with an individual known as Thomas Smith, for whom Shalash had laundered approximately \$100,000. Shalash then introduced Smith to Sadiquallah, as an individual who could collect debts by any means necessary.

The evidence also established that Sadiquallah and Smith agreed to kidnap L.E., or his son, in an attempt to retrieve the money; and then, if necessary, they would kill L.E. Three days later, when Sadiquallah learned that L.E. was in Lexington, Sadiquallah, along with others, cornered L.E. at his place of business and called Smith to carry out the plan. Smith, who had been working for the FBI during this entire period of time, reported the incident to the FBI, which then took L.E. and his son into protective custody.

Shalash was sentenced on June 22, 2020, for conspiring to commit kidnapping and committing money laundering. Shalash received two years in prison and five years of supervised release, including one year of home incarceration. Shalash was also ordered to pay a \$20,000 fine and forfeit \$81,861.99 in illegally laundered proceeds.

Under federal law, Sadiquallah must serve 85 percent of his prison sentence. Following his release, Sadiquallah will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for five years.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and James Robert Brown, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation-Louisville Division, jointly announced the sentence.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The United States was represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Andrew T. Boone and Kathryn M. Anderson.

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