

California Man Charged with Making Violent Threats Against Boston Globe Employees

A California man was arrested today and charged with making violent threats against Boston Globe employees in retaliation for the newspaper's editorial response to political attacks on the media.

Robert D. Chain, 68, of Encino, California, is charged with one count of making threatening communications in interstate commerce. Chain will appear in federal court in Los Angeles this afternoon and be transferred to Boston at a later date.

"In the past few months, this office has charged people with threatening to bomb a minority commencement ceremony at Harvard, threatening to shoot people at a Second Amendment rally, offering money to anyone who kills a federal agent, and mailing white powder and threatening notes to certain public figures," said U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling. "Anyone – regardless of political affiliation – who puts others in fear for their lives will be prosecuted by this office. In a time of increasing political polarization, and amid the increasing incidence of mass shootings, members of the public must police their own political rhetoric. Or we will."

"Everyone has a right to express their opinion, but threatening to kill people, takes it over the line and will not be tolerated," said Harold H. Shaw, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. "Today's arrest of Robert Chain should serve a warning to others, that making threats is not a prank, it's a federal crime. All threats are taken seriously, as we never

know if the subject behind the threat intends to follow through with their actions. Whether potentially hoax or not, each and every threat will be aggressively run to ground. These investigations are expensive and are costly to the taxpayers, can put innocent people at risk, divert law enforcement from responding to actual emergencies, and cause undue stress to victims. I commend the great work of the Boston and Los Angeles Joint Terrorism Task Forces for their diligence and professionalism, and continue to seek the public's support to immediately report threats or suspicious activity to law enforcement."

On Aug. 10, 2018, the Boston Globe announced that it was requesting that other newspaper publications around the country publish a coordinated editorial response to political attacks on the media. The coordinated editorial response was to be published on Thursday, Aug. 16, 2018.

According to court documents, immediately following the announcement, Chain began making threatening calls to the Boston Globe's newsroom. In the calls, Chain referred to the Globe as "the enemy of the people" and threatened to kill newspaper employees. In total, it is alleged that Chain made approximately 14 threatening phone calls to the Globe between August 10 and 22, 2018.

It is further alleged that on Aug. 16, 2018, the day the coordinated editorial response was published in the Boston Globe, Chain called the Globe newsroom and threatened to shoot Globe employees in the head "later today, at 4 o'clock." As a result of that call, local law enforcement responded to the Globe's offices and maintained a presence outside the building to ensure the safety of the employees.

The charge of making threatening communications in interstate commerce provides for a sentence of no greater than five years, one year of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based

upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

U.S. Attorney Lelling and FBI SAC Shaw made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Los Angeles Field Division; the Drug Enforcement Administration, Los Angeles Division; the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Los Angeles Division; the California Highway Patrol; and the Los Angeles Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney George P. Varghese of Lelling's National Security Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.