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Deputy U.S. Marshal Convicted of Conspiracy, Cyberstalking, Perjury, and Obstruction

A federal jury convicted a deputy U.S. Marshal yesterday for conspiracy to commit cyberstalking, cyberstalking, perjury, and obstruction of a federal matter.

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Ian R. Diaz, 44, of Brea, California, and his then-wife, an unindicted co-conspirator (CC-1), posed as a person with whom Diaz was formerly in a relationship (Jane Doe). In that guise, they sent themselves harassing and threatening electronic communications that contained apparent threats to harm CC-1; solicited and lured men found through Craigslist “personal” advertisements to engage in so-called “rape fantasies” in an attempt to stage a purported sexual assault on CC-1 orchestrated by Jane Doe; and staged one or more hoax sexual assaults and attempted sexual assaults on Diaz’s former wife. Diaz and CC-1 then reported this conduct to local law enforcement, falsely claiming that Jane Doe posed a genuine and serious threat to Diaz and CC-1. Their actions caused local law enforcement to arrest, charge, and detain Jane Doe in jail for nearly three months for conduct for which Diaz and CC-1 framed her.

“Ian Diaz abused his position as a deputy U.S. Marshal to execute an intricate cyberstalking scheme that framed an innocent person for sexual assault, leading to her unjust imprisonment for 88 days,” said Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “As this prosecution demonstrates, the Criminal Division is committed to preserving the public’s confidence in law enforcement by holding accountable any official who violates their oath of office and victimizes the community they are sworn to serve.”

In addition, Diaz and CC-1 took steps to conceal their conduct, including using falsely registered email accounts, using virtual private networks to access the internet anonymously, and communicating with each other using encrypted messaging services. Diaz also deleted email accounts used to communicate in furtherance of the scheme.

“Yesterday’s verdict is the culmination of unrelenting investigative work that began in 2017 when the Cyber Investigations Office initiated this case,” said Special Agent in Charge Harry A. Lidsky of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (DOJ-OIG) Cyber Investigations Office. “Diaz’s egregious actions and lies to law enforcement stripped a woman of her freedom and liberty. This kind of stalking, harassment, and obstruction is unconscionable, and yesterday, the jury held Diaz accountable for his crimes. I would like to thank the jury for their time, attention, and careful consideration of the facts of this case.”

“The evidence presented at trial exposed a harrowing scheme concocted by Diaz to frame someone for crimes they didn’t commit,” said Special Agent in Charge Zachary Shroyer of the DOJ-OIG Los Angeles Field Office. “Our investigators worked tirelessly to reveal the truth about the conspiracy, lies, and stalking he committed, and to find justice for his victim.”

Diaz was convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit cyberstalking, one count of cyberstalking, one count of perjury, and one count of obstructing a federal proceeding. He is scheduled to be sentenced on June 30 and faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The DOJ-OIG investigated the case.

Senior Litigation Counsel Marco A. Palmieri and Trial Attorney Rebecca G. Ross of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and Senior Trial Attorney Mona Sedky of the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section are prosecuting the case.