

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

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

GREGORY LEPSKY

Magistrate. No. 17-8071 (LDW)

**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

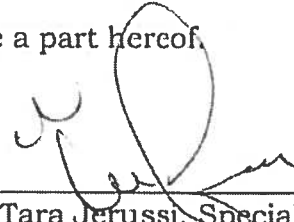
I, Tara Jerussi, being duly sworn, state the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:

**SEE ATTACHMENT A**

I further state that I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and that this complaint is based on the following facts:

**SEE ATTACHMENT B**

continued on the attached pages and made a part hereof.

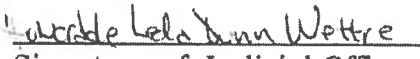
  
Tara Jerussi, Special Agent  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to by telephone pursuant to  
Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1(b)(2)(A)

May 4, 2017 at  
Date

Newark, New Jersey

Honorable Leda Dunn Wettre  
United States Magistrate Judge  
Name & Title of Judicial Officer

  
Signature of Judicial Officer

8:12pm  
05/04/17

**ATTACHMENT A**

**(Attempt to Provide Material Support to a  
Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization)**

From at least on or about December 24, 2016 until February 21, 2017,  
in Ocean County, in the District of New Jersey, and elsewhere, defendant

**GREGORY LEPSKY**

knowingly and unlawfully attempted to provide material support and  
resources, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339A(b),  
including services and personnel, to a foreign terrorist organization, namely the  
Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, knowing that the organization was a  
designated terrorist organization, and that the organization had engaged and  
was engaging in terrorist activity and terrorism.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B(a)(1) and  
2339B(d).

**ATTACHMENT B**

I, Tara Jerussi, being duly sworn, depose and say:

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") and have been since 2010. I am currently assigned to the Joint Terrorism Task Force ("JTTF") and have worked on investigations relating to international terrorism, violent extremists, and explosives-related criminal conduct since in or about 2012. My experience as a Special Agent has included the investigation of cases involving the use of computers and the Internet to commit terrorism-related offenses. I have received training and have gained experience in physical surveillance, interviewed witnesses, participated in the execution of arrest and search warrants, and secured other relevant information using various investigative techniques, including electronic surveillance. From my experiences and training with the FBI, I have become familiar with the techniques, practices, jargon, and equipment used by persons involved with terrorism and explosives-related offenses. The information contained in this affidavit is based upon my personal knowledge and observation, my training and experience, conversations with other law enforcement officers and witnesses, and the review of documents and records.

2. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause for a criminal complaint, I have not included every detail of every aspect of the investigation. Rather, I have set forth only those facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause for a criminal complaint. Unless specifically indicated, all conversations and statements described in this affidavit are related in substance and in part. Dates of events in this affidavit are asserted as having occurred on or about the asserted date.

**Summary of Investigation**

3. An ongoing investigation conducted by the FBI/JTTF has revealed that GREGORY LEPSKY ("LEPSKY") threatened to use and was attempting, until his arrest on February 21, 2017, to make and use a destructive device – specifically a pressure-cooker bomb – with the intent to detonate that bomb in New York City and kill people as part of his support of ISIS.

**The Defendant**

4. LEPSKY is a 20-year-old natural born citizen of the United States and until February 21, 2017, was a resident of Point Pleasant, New Jersey.

**Overview of ISIS**

5. On or about October 15, 2004, the United States Secretary of State designated al- Qaeda in Iraq ("AQI"), then known as Jam 'at al Tawid wa' al- Jahid, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization ("FTO") under Section 219 of the

Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity under section 1(b) of Executive order 13224.

6. On or about May 15, 2014, the Secretary of State amended the designation of AQI as an FTO under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity under section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224 to add the alias ISIL as its primary name. The Secretary of State also added the following aliases to the FTO listing: The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham ("ISIS," which is how the FTO will be referenced herein), The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ad-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-Iraq wa-sh-Sham, Daesh, Dawla al Islamiya, and Al-Furquan Establishment for Media Production. On September 21, 2015, the Secretary added the following aliases to the FTO listing: Islamic State, ISIL, and ISIS. To date, ISIS remains a designated FTO.

7. ISIS continues to operate in Iraq and Syria in its effort to establish an Islamic state in those countries. In or about 2014, ISIS declared that it had established a caliphate in Iraq and Syria and has since urged like-minded individuals to travel there to support ISIS's efforts to secure the territory ISIS claims to control.

8. Based on open source information, ISIS has murdered by beheading civilians/non-combatants from the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan, among others, and has reportedly murdered dozens of people at a time, carried out public executions, and committed other brutal and terrorist acts.

9. ISIS has and continues to recruit individuals throughout the world, including individuals from the United States and other western countries, to travel to Syria and Iraq for the purpose of joining its ranks. As part of its recruiting efforts, ISIS has used the internet and various social media platforms to publicize its military and terrorist activities. In its effort to draw in potential recruits, ISIS has published video recordings and photographs of its forces in action, articles designed to justify its fight to establish the caliphate, and issued other materials to encourage readers to join its ranks.

10. Beginning in 2014, using social media, ISIS has called for attacks against citizens - civilian and military - of the countries participating in the United States-led coalition military action against ISIS. For instance, on September 21, 2014, ISIS released a speech of Abu Muhammed Al-Adnani, a senior leader and official spokesman of ISIS. In this speech, entitled, "Indeed Your Lord is Ever Watchful," Al-Adnani calls on Muslims who support ISIS from around the world to "defend the Islamic State" and to "rise and defend your state from your place where you may be." Using social media, ISIS has also encouraged individuals to kill specific persons within the United States.

11. ISIS has also published guidance that referred specifically to bomb-making techniques that earlier had been published in Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's ("AQAP") *Inspire* magazine, and adopted that instruction as part of its own campaign.

**Lepsky Attacked His Family Dog and was Arrested**

12. On February 21, 2017, New Jersey state law enforcement authorities received a telephone call from a family member of LEPSKY ("Family Member 1"). Family Member 1, who was at work at the time, told local law enforcement that LEPSKY was at their shared residence in Point Pleasant, New Jersey (the "Lepsky Residence"). According to Family Member 1, LEPSKY told Family Member 1 that he was in possession of a weapon and was going to kill the family dog.

13. Local law enforcement officers responded to the Lepsky Residence shortly thereafter. At the scene, officers contacted LEPSKY by telephone and asked him to come out of the Lepsky Residence. LEPSKY eventually exited the residence, bleeding from one of his arms. LEPSKY was in possession of an Apple iPhone ("Lepsky Cellular Phone") at that time. LEPSKY was taken into custody and on-site paramedics began treating LEPSKY. While receiving treatment, and without any questioning or prompting from law-enforcement officers, LEPSKY stated that he was going to kill his mother and that he had pledged his allegiance to "Allah." LEPSKY further stated he had stabbed the family dog because, in LEPSKY's view of Islam, the dog was "dirty." LEPSKY also stated he had joined ISIS and had plane tickets to Turkey. When the Lepsky Cellular Phone was being packaged into an evidence bag, the screen lit up and revealed the background photograph on the phone to be a black flag with white insignia and writing on it. Based on my training and experience, the background photograph appears to depict ISIS's flag.

14. Law enforcement officers then entered the Lepsky Residence to determine if anyone else was inside and to check on the welfare of the family dog. The officers found the family dog under a bed in Family Member 1's bedroom. The family dog had a large slash wound to its back but was alive. Law enforcement officers also saw a large Ka-Bar Becker BK9 Combat Bowie Fixed Blade Knife with an approximate 12-inch blade in plain view on a dresser that had been knocked over in LEPSKY's bedroom. Officers found no persons in the Lepsky Residence, and there was no evidence that anyone other than LEPSKY and Family Member 1 had been in the home that day.

**Search of the Lepsky Residence**

15. Law enforcement officers then conducted a lawful search of the Lepsky Residence and recovered, among other items, an empty stainless steel pressure cooker that had been stored behind a roll of bubble wrap in LEPSKY's

bedroom closet. Family Member 1 told the officers that he/she had never seen the pressure cooker before. Officers also recovered several books from Lepsky's bedroom, including *Martyrdom in Jihad versus Suicide Bombing*.

**Lepsky Stated His Plan to Bomb New York City**

16. LEPSKY was subsequently transported to a local hospital for treatment. LEPSKY told medical personnel, in the presence of law enforcement officers, that his name was Allah Abdel Rochmad (phonetic) and that he was working for ISIS.

17. LEPSKY further stated to medical personnel, in the presence of law enforcement officers, that he had communicated with ISIS members through Facebook. LEPSKY stated that that was going to take a pressure cooker, use it to make a bomb, and place it in a busy area in New York City in order to kill as many people as possible. LEPSKY also stated that he was looking forward to more bombs and explosions happening very soon.

18. LEPSKY explained that he had watched several videos on the internet relating to bomb making. LEPSKY further advised a hospital employee that he was trying to be a suicide bomber, but the police caught him while he was planning the attack.

19. The following day, on February 22, 2017, LEPSKY spontaneously told a law enforcement officer that he was going to purchase black musket gunpowder online and use it in a pressure cooker that he had in his room. LEPSKY then described how he was going to construct a destructive device, including the steps he was going to take to make the pressure cooker suitable for holding the explosive charges, the type of explosive he was going to use, and the type of detonators to be attached to the device. LEPSKY further told the officer that he had read online how to make the pressure cooker bomb.

20. LEPSKY also stated that he was going to take the pressure cooker and gunpowder to New York City, bring the items into a crowded area of Manhattan, and blow it up to kill people. LEPSKY explained that he would be rewarded in the afterlife for this act.

21. LEPSKY expressed regret for having tried to kill the family dog because, according to him, if he had not done so, the police would not have discovered his plan.

22. Based on my training and experience, I am aware that the device, components, and method of construction described by LEPSKY are similar to those contained in articles published by various FTOs. These articles are available online and often advocate for the use of the explosive devices in the United States.

**Evidence and Online Communications Revealing  
LEPSKY's Violent Ideology and Intention to Support ISIS**

23. On February 24, 2017, law enforcement officers interviewed Family Member 1. Family Member 1 stated that he/she noticed changes in LEPSKY's behavior beginning in early December 2016. According to Family Member 1, LEPSKY began to espouse views and behaviors sometimes associated with radical Islam. For example, LEPSKY stated that "gays" are not tolerated in the Muslim faith and Family Member 1 gestured a slashing motion with his/her hand and arm across the throat, illustrating what LEPSKY had explained should happen to homosexuals.

24. Based, in part, on the information provided by Family Member 1, the FBI obtained court-authorization to search LEPSKY's Facebook account (the "Lepsky Facebook Account"). The user name associated with the Lepsky Facebook Account was "Greg Abnghari". Records provided to the FBI by Facebook listed the account subscriber as "Greg Lepsky," and the cellular telephone number associated with the account was the same number as for the Lepsky Cellular Phone. Based upon this information and the information that follows, Your Affiant believes that the person using the Lepsky Cellular Phone and the Lepsky Facebook Account was, in fact, LEPSKY. The FBI discovered several statements made by LEPSKY over the Lepsky Facebook Account concerning ISIS.

25. For example, on February 16, 2017, Lepsky sent to another Facebook user a photograph of an individual in military-like attire holding a knife and the decapitated head of another person. Based on my review of the photograph, I submit that it suggests that the individual in the military-like attire had just beheaded the person. LEPSKY included the following text with the photograph: "[t]hat is the one guy I know from Britain who went to syria to fight."

26. On or about February 17, 2017, LEPSKY stated over Facebook:

Yeah I wasn't kidding when I told u I began taking my birth religion serious again . . . My birth religion is basically islam lmao . . . Because my dad is from a region in Russia that is Islamic called Chechnya. But when he moved to America he stopped being Muslim and changed his last name and began u know just not caring about his religion. My birth religion is basically islam lmao . . . But I want to be different I want to be religious and grow up and be a martyr.

27. The recipient of the above messages replied that doing so was "insane," and LEPSKY stated, "Im actually not joking this time I usually just f\*\*k with u but I actually want to die for the sake of God because when u do u get automatic heaven."

28. After being told he would “go to hell” if he committed suicide, LEPSKY responded, “It depends how . . . if u just cut ur wrists because ur depressed and die yeah you go to hell. But if you drive a car with a bunch of explosives in it to where ur enemies are located and blow yourself up with them then u go to heaven and they all go to hell.” LEPSKY then was asked, “What if you just killed a bunch of innocent people who were fighting to keep they’re families alive.” In response, LEPSKY wrote, “This is all propaganda and lies. It is the complete opposite. They invaded Iraq and Afghanistan and killed innocent ppl.”

29. On or about February 17, 2017, LEPSKY also posted a photograph of a dog, accompanied by messages stating, “[t]his dog is now 14 years old u beloece that?” and “Hopefully he dies soon.” This affiant has been able to see the dog that was stabbed. The photograph of the dog posted to the Facebook page appears to be the same dog that LEPSKY stabbed.

30. On or about February 19, 2017, LEPSKY stated to another Facebook user, “I converted to Islam recently and decided im going to syria to help my brothers fight the kuffar [*transl.*, non-believers].” During the same conversation, LEPSKY also stated, “please listen to me he and fight the kuffar. Def the honor of Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him.”

31. On February 19, 2017, LEPSKY posted photographs of two rifle cartridges with what appear to be pills. In another picture, LEPSKY posted a photograph of a white male dressed in military fatigues with a pistol in his left hand and a semi-automatic rifle in his right hand. These photographs were accompanied by a message stating, “look at these sick photos of me yoo.” I have compared the photo of the white male that was posted to known photos of LEPSKY. Based on my review of the photographs, I believe that the white male depicted in the photograph is LEPSKY.

32. In response to the posted photographs, an unidentified individual warned LEPSKY to delete the photographs, or risk having his door “kicked in” by the police. LEPSKY wrote in response, “fuk the police they are alostolates and disbelievers.” Based on my training and experience, I believe that LEPSKY intended to state that the police are apostates and disbelievers.

33. On February 19, 2017, a third individual contacted LEPSKY and stated, “Lol Greg was up where u at?” In response, LEPSKY stated, “I converted to Islam recently and decided im going to Syria to help my brothers fight the kuffar . . . if u are Muslim u should come inshaAllah [God-willing] . . . Allah will guide u akhi [brother]. Please listen to me and fight the kuffar [non-believers]. Defend the honor of Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him.” LEPSKY then said “I can join isis.”

**Internet Searches, Physical Evidence, and Electronic Communications Revealing LEPSKY's Intention to Commit Violent Acts in Support of ISIS**

34. Based, in part, on the above information, the FBI obtained court-authorization to search the Lepsky Residence for additional evidence. On March 25, 2017, the FBI executed a search at the Lepsky Residence and found and/or recovered several items including, among others, an Apple laptop computer, a tactical folding knife with a blade approximately 6 inches in length knife, several boxes of wooden matches in LEPSKY's drawer, and a cellular telephone.

35. The FBI subsequently obtained court-authorization to search the Lepsky Cellular Phone and several other online accounts associated with LEPSKY. A search of those accounts revealed the following images, among others:

- a. An image of the flag used by ISIS;
- b. A photograph showing LEPSKY holding a large, combat-style knife that is consistent with the Ka-Bar combat knife it appears LEPSKY used to stab the family dog;
- c. Anti-Semitic cartoons;
- d. Several photographs of LEPSKY holding a handgun and/or a semi-automatic rifle;
- e. A photograph of LEPSKY dressed in battle fatigues and holding firearms with his index finger extended in a manner that is consistent with a gesture used by ISIS members and supporters.

36. The FBI also discovered that LEPSKY had conducted research online regarding how to make a pressure cooker bomb. Specifically, LEPSKY's cellular telephone contained an article from AQAP's *Inspire* magazine titled, *How to Build a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom*. The article contains step-by-step instructions regarding how to build a pressure cooker bomb.

37. The article also lists the items needed to build a pressure-cooker bomb, which items include a pressure cooker, a timing device, and wooden matches – all items that were found in the Lepsky Residence. The instructions state, "Put your trust in Allah and pray for the success of your operation," and the instructions advise people to "[w]ear gloves throughout the preparation of the explosive to avoid leaving behind fingerprints."

38. Subsequently, the Apple laptop recovered during the execution of the search warrant was examined by investigators. Among the items recovered from the laptop were files from the Lepsky Cellular Phone that had been "backed-up" to an iCloud account associated with the Apple laptop computer. The term "backed-up" refers to a process by which a record of many files essential to the operation of an iPhone (i.e. applications installed, application data, photos, text conversations, location history, wireless signal history, telephone call logs, internet search history, and website history, etc.) are saved to a cloud-based system.

39. A review of the files from the Lepsky Cellular Phone also revealed that it had been used to send and receive multiple text messages regarding violent jihad.

40. For example, on or about January 22, 2017, LEPSKY explained to an unidentified individual, "I linked up with some guy I met on a chat website and he wants me to become Muslim and join ISIS." LEPSKY also stated, "i really wanna go join ISIS."

41. On or about January 14, 2017 LEPSKY sent a series of text messages to another family member ("Family Member-2"). In the first text message, LEPSKY forwarded a message that read:

"InshaAllah brother. Allah (the most exalted) commands us Muslims to fight against the desbelivers until there is none left! Allah Akbar. Flasehood has departed and truth has come said out beloved prophet Muhammad (ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam) I advise u to leave the UK for it is the land of kufr, Bid'ah, and idoltary And travel to Al Sham and aid the muqmineen in their battle against taghut. If u need anything please let me know, u have my number. If u die brother u will go to paradise, dont be afraid when u face persection! When u get there talk to Abdul Ahad bin Khattab and tell him that I sent u, he will show u the ropes around. If u dont plan on traveling my brother, I can show u a tutorial on how to make IED's and explosives so u can carry Jihad operations in the UK. Please my brother dont miss this chance, u are obligated according to Allah"

Your affiant notes that this quote is consistent with the mandate issued by ISIS leaders beginning in 2014 to conduct terrorist activity in Western countries as described in paragraph 10, above.

42. During that series of texts to Family Member-2, LEPSKY also praised ISIS's leader, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, stating "The prince of the believers, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi (hafid hula) is not dead, they lied. For the fighting has just begun! God willing we will be victorious!" The text ended with

writing in Arabic that, when translated, read "The fighting has just begun! God willing, we will prevail!"

43. The FBI also discovered that LEPSKY sent several larger data messages to Family Member-2 relating to ISIS. For example, on or about January 15, 2017, LEPSKY sent Family Member 2 images of the instructions for a pressure-cooker bomb (the same instructions from *Inspire* magazine.

44. During the course of the investigation, law-enforcement officers determined that the pressure cooker recovered from LEPSKY's bedroom was purchased from an online retailer ("retailer-1") on January 16, 2017, and shipped to Lepsky from retailer-1's facility in Wisconsin on or about January 17, 2017. The pressure cooker was purchased using Family Member-1's credit card, and the item was shipped to LEPSKY's residence and addressed to "Gregory Lepsky".

45. In addition to the various photographs and messages recovered from the Lepsky Cellular Phone, the FBI also reviewed the internet search history from the phone. It revealed that between January 14, 2017, and February 4, 2017, LEPSKY conducted approximately 3,340 internet searches, including many searches relating to ISIS propaganda, terrorist attacks, and beheadings:

Date	Time (UTC)	Search Value
2/4/2017	8:28:04 PM	Buy shahada flag banner
2/4/2017	7:28:07 PM	Where to buy black jihad flag
2/4/2017	4:45:16 PM	france terrorist attack
2/4/2017	3:34:50 AM	isis propaganda video
2/4/2017	3:33:10 AM	isis official video site
2/4/2017	3:33:22 AM	Where does ISIS upload their beheading video forum
2/4/2017	3:31:59 AM	isis official video site
2/4/2017	1:46:48 AM	jews do control everything
2/3/2017	10:54:55 PM	gay man thrown off building
2/1/2017	9:27:16 PM	anti semitic pictures
2/1/2017	8:37:09 PM	Ka-Bar Becker BK9 Combat Bowie Fixed Blade Knife
2/1/2017	6:02:32 PM	isis in chechnya
1/31/2017	10:44:30 PM	knife used for beheading
1/31/2017	10:40:02 PM	top 10 best combat knives
1/31/2017	9:41:34 PM	how to make anthrax powder
1/31/2017	9:41:17 PM	anthrax explosive
1/31/2017	3:18:11 AM	canada mosque shooting

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time (UTC)</b>	<b>Search Value</b>
1/28/2017	7:08:03 PM	isis attack israel
1/25/2017	2:40:31 PM	terrorist attacks 2016
1/25/2017	2:40:14 PM	anwar al-awlaki
1/24/2017	11:10:33 PM	isis tikrit massacre
1/24/2017	4:20:37 PM	books spreading hate against non believers
1/23/2017	9:32:40 PM	isis video execute christians

46. After searching for “top 10 best combat knives” and “knife used for beheading” and just minutes after having searched for the “Ka-Bar Becker BK9 Combat Bowie Fixed Blade Knife” the Lepsky Cellular phone was used on January 31, 2107 to access another online retailer (“retailer-2”). Records from Retailer-2 show that the Ka-Bar knife--the same knife recovered from the Lepsky residence and used to stab the family dog—was purchased at that time.