

 An official website of the United States government
[Here's how you know](#)



Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 26, 2021

New Jersey Man Admits Conspiring with White Supremacists to Vandalize Synagogues Across the Country

A New Jersey man pleaded guilty today to his role in conspiring with members of a white supremacist hate group to threaten and intimidate African Americans and Jewish Americans by vandalizing minority-owned properties throughout the country in September 2019.

Richard Tobin, 19, of Brooklawn, pleaded guilty to an information charging him with conspiracy against rights. U.S. District Court Judge Robert B. Kugler scheduled sentencing for June 28, 2021.

“Conspiring with others to vandalize and destroy property owned by African-Americans and Jewish Americans will not be tolerated by the Department of Justice,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Pam Karlan of the Civil Rights Division. “Every person should feel secure knowing they have the right to own and use their property free from being targeted because of their race or religion. We will continue to protect the civil rights of all individuals and vigorously prosecute bias motivated crimes.”

“Americans should never have to fear racist, anti-Semitic or any other form of bias-motivated violence,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Rachael A. Honig for the District of New Jersey. “This defendant encouraged hateful acts of violence against individuals and their houses of worship, based solely on their religion or the color of their skin. Together with our colleagues in the Civil Rights Division and the Joint Terrorism Task Force, this office will continue to work every day to identify individuals like him and bring them swiftly to justice.”

“The FBI and our partners simply won’t tolerate crimes spurred by hate, which are meant to intimidate and isolate the groups targeted,” said Michael J. Driscoll, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Philadelphia Division. “People of all races and faiths deserve to feel safe in their communities. Richard Tobin encouraged others to victimize innocent people, in furtherance of his abhorrent white supremacist beliefs. While we all have the right to believe whatever we want, when those views lead to violence, that’s a different and dangerous story.”

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Tobin admitted that from Sept. 15 to Sept. 23, 2019, he was a member of a white supremacist group, “The Base,” and during that time, he communicated online with other members and directed them to destroy and vandalize properties affiliated with African Americans and Jewish Americans. Tobin dubbed this coordinated attack “Kristallnacht,” or “Night of Broken Glass,” after an attack in Germany on Nov. 9 and 10, 1938, in which Nazis murdered Jewish people and burned and destroyed Jewish homes, synagogues, stores and schools. Tobin implored members of The Base to post propaganda flyers and to break windows and slash tires belonging to African Americans and Jewish Americans. On Sept. 21, 2019, members of The Base vandalized synagogues in Racine, Wisconsin, and Hancock, Michigan, by spray painting them with hate symbols.

A conspirator, Yousef Omar Barasneh, previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy against rights in federal court in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, for his role in vandalizing the synagogue in Racine, Wisconsin.

The conspiracy charge carries a maximum potential penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense, whichever is greater.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristen M. Harberg of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Camden and Trial Attorney Eric Peffley of the Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section.

Topic(s):

Civil Rights

Component(s):

Civil Rights Division

Press Release Number:

21-185

Updated February 26, 2021