

Member of White Supremacist Group Sentenced for Federal Hate Crimes for Conspiracy Targeting Black and Jewish People and Defacing Michigan Synagogue with Neo-Nazi Symbols

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Michigan

https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdmi/pr/2024_0604_Weeden_N_Sentenced

MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN — U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan Mark Totten today announced that Nathan Weeden, 23, of Houghton, Michigan was sentenced to 26 months for conspiring with other members of a white supremacist group, The Base, to victimize Black and Jewish people, and for defacing Temple Jacob, a Jewish synagogue in Hancock, Michigan, using swastikas and symbols associated with The Base.

"Today's sentencing sends a strong message that hate will not be tolerated," said **U.S. Attorney Mark Totten**. "No one should be the target of hate because of their race, ethnicity, religion, or any other status. When hateful words become hateful acts, my office will use every tool we have to protect the public and secure justice like we did in this case."

"This sentence sends a strong message that threatening and intimidating people because of their religion, race or ethnic characteristics will not be tolerated in this country," said **Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division**. "White supremacist-fueled violence is a stain on our history and perpetrators of such violence will be held accountable. No one should live in fear because of who they are, what they believe or where they worship. The Justice Department will continue to investigate and prosecute those who desecrate houses of worship and who conspire to intimidate people seeking to exercise the legal rights guaranteed to all Americans."

In January, Weeden was convicted at trial of one count of conspiring to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any person in the exercise of their rights and one count of intentionally defacing, damaging or destroying religious property because of the race or ethnic characteristics of individuals associated with that property. Weeden's co-conspirators Richard Tobin (see [here](#) and [here](#)) and Yousef Barasneh (see [here](#) and [here](#)) were previously convicted of federal crimes in this incident.

In September 2019, Weeden, Tobin, and Barasneh – all members of The Base, a multi-state, white supremacist organization – used an encrypted messaging platform to discuss vandalizing property associated with African Americans and Jewish Americans. Weeden and his co-conspirators dubbed their plan, "Operation Kristallnacht," which in German means "Night of Broken Glass." This term referenced events that took place on November 9-10, 1938, in which Nazis murdered Jews and burned and destroyed their homes, synagogues, schools, and places of business. Weeden carried out this plan on September 21, 2019, when he spray-painted swastikas and symbols associated with The Base on the outside walls of Temple Jacob.

In its Sentencing Memorandum, attached to this press release, the government urged the Court to sentence Weeden to at least 36 months incarceration, considering the nature and extent of his hate crimes, his persistent dedication to violent neo-Nazi ideology, his prior illegal conversion of a rifle to a fully automatic weapon, his lack of remorse, the danger he poses to the community, and the need for deterrence.

"Intimidation, vandalism, and other hateful threatening acts will not be tolerated by any group of people in this state or nation, and today's sentence reflects that belief," said **Cheyvoryea Gibson, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Michigan**. "The FBI is always committed to combatting hate crimes and seeking justice for all. If you are a victim of or witness to a hate crime, call 1-800-225-5324 or submit a tip to tips.fbi.gov."

"Accountability matters. Today's sentence is representative of our community's views on hate crime-inspired violence. People who engage in this behavior will be identified and fully prosecuted by the law," said **Special Agent in Charge James Deir of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Detroit Field Office**. "ATF is steadfast in its commitment to protecting everyone across this great state against violent criminals fueled by hatred and intolerance."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nils Kessler and Trial Attorney Eric Peffley of the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section. The FBI investigated the case with assistance from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and Hancock Police Department.

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