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## **Louisiana Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiring to Violate the Civil Rights of a Homeowner**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Grace Chung Becker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, and Donald W. Washington, United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, today announced that JUSTIN SIGLER, 19, of Natchitoches, Louisiana, pled guilty to conspiring with two other individuals to violate the civil rights of an African American man in Lena, Louisiana.

On July 15, 2007, the victim and his wife moved some of their possessions into a home in Lena. In so doing, they became the only African-American residents on that particular street. On July 16, 2007, Sigler and two other individuals talked about scaring the victim, referring to him with a racial slur. They then fired shotguns at a target on a field adjacent to the victim's property before one member of the group turned his shotgun away from the target and towards the victim and his house. The next day, Sigler and the two other individuals agreed to scare the victim again by dressing Sigler as a member of the Klu Klux Klan. Once Sigler was so dressed, the three co-conspirators went after nightfall to a field adjacent to the victim's residence and said, "White Power!" and "White Knights!" Shaken by these events, the victims sold their home.

In entering his plea today, the defendant admitted that he threatened the victim when he dressed like a member of the Klu Klux Klan and that he intended to frighten the victim from his home because the victim is an African-American.

At sentencing on April 17, 2009, Sigler faces a maximum punishment of 10 years in prison.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Grace Chung Becker said, "The defendant today acknowledged that he dressed as a member of the Klu Klux Klan in order to threaten an African-American who had recently moved into a house in the neighborhood. The defendant in this case chose to express his threatening message through the use of a symbol steeped in the history of racial tyranny and violence. When he used that symbol to threaten and intimidate African-Americans, he broke the law. The Department of Justice does, and will continue to, vigorously pursue any case like this one, involving racially-motivated threats aimed at interfering with federally-protected rights."

United States Attorney Donald W. Washington said, “The defendant today took responsibility for committing a federal crime by using a powerful symbol of hate to intimidate a new homeowner because of his race. It is a violation of federal law to conspire to intimidate, oppress, injure or threaten a person because of his race and because he is exercising and enjoying rights guaranteed and protected by the laws and Constitution of the United States. Our civil rights laws protect the civil rights of all Americans, and they remind us that we are all members of one particular race - the human race.”

The Federal Bureau of Investigation investigated this case, which was prosecuted jointly by Assistant United States Attorney Mary Mudrick of the United States Attorney’s Office and by Trial Attorney Forrest Christian of the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice.

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