



Department of Justice

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MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FIREBOMBING MADISON BUILDING

MADISON, WIS. – A Madison, Wisconsin man pleaded guilty today to the May 2022 firebombing of a Madison office building. Hridindu Sankar Roychowdhury, 29, pleaded guilty to attempting to cause damage by means of fire or an explosive.

On Sunday, May 8, 2022, at approximately 6:06 a.m., law enforcement responded to an active fire at an office building located in Madison. Once inside the building, police observed a mason jar under a broken window; the jar was broken, and the lid and screw top were burned black. The police also saw a purple disposable lighter near the mason jar. On the opposite wall from the window, the police saw another mason jar with the lid on and a blue cloth tucked into the top; the cloth was singed. The jar was about half full of a clear fluid that smelled like an accelerant. Outside of the building, someone spray painted on one wall, "If abortions aren't safe then you aren't either" and, on another wall, a large "A" with a circle around it and the number "1312." During the investigation, law enforcement collected DNA from the scene of the attack.

In March 2023, law enforcement identified Roychowdhury as a possible suspect. Local police officers observed Roychowdhury dispose of food in a public trash can; the officers recovered the leftover food and related items, and law enforcement collected DNA from the food. On March 17, 2023, law enforcement advised that a forensic biologist examined the DNA evidence recovered from the attack scene and compared it to the DNA collected from the food contents. The forensic biologist found the two samples matched and likely were the same individual.

In March 2023, Roychowdhury travelled from Madison to Portland, Maine, and he purchased a one-way ticket from Boston, Massachusetts to Guatemala City, departing March 28, 2023. Law enforcement arrested Roychowdhury at Boston Logan International Airport that day.

"I am deeply grateful to our local and federal law enforcement partners for their dedication and persistence in solving this crime," said U.S. Attorney Timothy M. O'Shea for the Western District of Wisconsin. "In our shared American experiment, conflicting views must be resolved through discussion, the courts, and the ballot

box. Arson and other acts of domestic terrorism are crimes that will be punished and have no place in a healthy democracy.”

“There is no place in our society for flagrant disregard for safety through firebombing a place of business, and today’s change of plea is one step further to closure for the victims,” said ATF Acting Special Agent in Charge Bradley Engelbert, of the St. Paul Field Division. “This was a complicated investigation. I am proud of the work our agents put into this and am appreciative of the tremendous team effort that went into this investigation.”

“The firebombing was an unacceptable attack on the safety and constitutionally protected rights of every citizen in the state of Wisconsin,” said Special Agent in Charge Michael E. Hensle of the FBI Milwaukee Field Office. “I commend the thorough and exhaustive investigative efforts of the FBI with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners whose efforts led to the identification and subsequent guilty plea. Let this be a warning to anyone who seeks to use intimidation through threats or committing acts of violence, the FBI along with our partners will work together to ensure that those who break the law are held accountable.”

Roychowdhury faces a mandatory minimum penalty of five years and a maximum of 20 years in prison. A sentencing hearing is scheduled for February 14, 2024. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The charge against Roychowdhury is the result of an investigation by the Madison Police Department, Wisconsin State Capitol Police Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force, Homeland Security Investigations, Dane County Sheriff’s Office, with the assistance of the FBI Boston Field Office, Boston Police Department, Massachusetts State Police, U.S. Coast Guard, Federal Air Marshal Service, and Transportation Security Administration.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Altman for the Western District of Wisconsin and Trial Attorney Justin Sher of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section are prosecuting the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Amanda Beck for the District of Massachusetts handled the defendant’s appearance in Boston following his arrest.

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