



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Indiana

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FEDERAL CHARGES FILED IN CARMEL SYNAGOGUE HATE INCIDENT

Cloverdale man spray-painted Nazi flags and started fire on Synagogue property

PRESS RELEASE

Indianapolis – United States Attorney Josh Minkler, FBI Indianapolis Special Agent in Charge Grant Mendenhall and Carmel Police Chief Jim Barlow announced today an arrest in the recent Carmel Jewish Synagogue graffiti and fire incident. Nolan Brewer, 20, Cloverdale, was charged today in federal court on criminal complaint with conspiracy to violate civil rights.

“Federal civil rights laws protect our rights to worship freely without threats or intimidation,” said Minkler. “Those who choose to deny anyone those rights by spreading hate and bigotry will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of federal law.”

In the early morning hours of July 28, 2018, anti-Semitic symbols – namely two Nazi flags and two Iron Crosses – were spray-painted on a brick structure of the Congregation Shaarey Tefilla, a Jewish Synagogue in Carmel. The images measured over a foot in height and were painted on two sides of the structure. In addition to the graffiti, several areas of the grass and ground around the structure were burned, leaving visible black burn residue on one side of the structure. The Congregation Shaarey Tefilla immediately contacted law enforcement.

Carmel Police received information linking Brewer to the graffiti and fire at Congregation Shaarey Tefilla, which they shared with the FBI. The FBI and Carmel Police investigated and discovered evidence linking Brewer and a co-conspirator to the Synagogue incident, including surveillance video showing Brewer and his co-conspirator, the day before the incident, purchasing red and black spray paint and bandanas from Wal-Mart.

On August 15, 2018, the FBI and Carmel Police executed search warrants at Brewer’s residence and vehicle and found additional evidence of the crime, including the cans of spray paint and items consistent with the burned areas around the structure. Brewer was arrested at that time on federal charges of conspiracy to violate civil rights. His co-conspirator has also been arrested by Carmel Police.

This case is being investigated by the FBI and the Carmel Police Department.

"The FBI takes allegations of potential hate crimes very seriously and will not tolerate this type of criminal activity and intimidation directed towards members of our Jewish community," stated Greg Massa, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, FBI Indianapolis. "This office, with the assistance of our law enforcement and community partners, will aggressively prosecute those who commit hate crimes of any kind."

"The Carmel Police Department is proud to have been a part of such a dedicated team that was focused on finding out who vandalized the Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in Carmel. We hope the apprehension of these suspects sends a clear message that hate has no place in Carmel and that anyone who tries to desecrate property or send a hate message in our community will be found and prosecuted to the full extent of the law," said Carmel Police Chief Jim Barlow.

"We put all available resources on this investigation because we do not take these actions lightly. I am very proud of our police department and the other law enforcement agencies that worked together for this successful conclusion. As difficult as this incident was, it was gratifying to see the public show of support for the Congregation Shaarey Tefilla, that was targeted by this hate crime," said Mayor Jim Brainard.

A criminal complaint is only a charge and not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Nick Linder and Matthew Rinka. The charge of conspiracy to violate civil rights carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Brewer had his initial appearance hearing today and remains in the custody of the United States Marshal Service. His detention hearing is set for August 21, 2018, at 3:00 p.m., before a magistrate judge.

In October 2017, United States Attorney Josh J. Minkler announced a Strategic Plan designed to shape and strengthen the District's response to its most significant public safety challenges. This prosecution demonstrates the Office's firm commitment to prosecuting criminal violations of civil rights laws and partnering with state and local law enforcement to do so. *See* United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of Indiana [Strategic Plan 7.1–7.2](#).

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