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AUSAs Gain Conviction in Connection with Kidnapping, Terrorism Plot

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Following a three-week trial, a federal jury convicted two defendants of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, providing material support to terrorists and conspiracy to murder an officer or employee of the United States. Three more individuals were convicted of conspiracy to commit kidnapping resulting in death and kidnapping resulting in death. Finally, another defendant pled guilty to providing material support to terrorists and being in possession of a firearm while unlawfully in the United States.

The case centered on a kidnapping plot that intended to use a three-year-old child as leverage to “rid the world of purportedly corrupt institutions, including the FBI, CIA, and U.S. military, and to kill those who did not convert and follow” the group, according to a Department of Justice (DOJ) [release](#).

This week, a federal judge sentenced the five individuals: Jany Leveille, Siraj Ibn Wahhaj, his sisters Hujrah Wahhaj and Subhanah Wahhaj, and Subhanah’s husband, Lucas Morton.

Leveille accepted a plea agreement and was accordingly sentenced to 15 years in prison. Upon her release, Leveille will enter removal proceedings.

Siraj Wahhaj and Lucas Morton were convicted of the material support and conspiracy charges and accordingly sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Hujrah Wahhaj, Subhanah Wahhaj and Lucas Morton were additionally convicted of the conspiracy to kidnap and kidnapping charges and given the same sentence.

At trial, it was demonstrated that the group was led by Leveille. In December 2017, they abducted Siraj Wahhaj’s three-year-old son, Abdul Ghani, from his mother in Georgia and transported him to a remote property in Amalia, New Mexico. The group intended to use the child as a prop in a plan to rid the world of purportedly corrupt institutions, including the FBI, CIA, and U.S. military, and to kill those who did not convert and follow Leveille. The planning and training for this conspiracy took place at a heavily fortified, purpose-built, militarized compound in Amalia. Abdul Ghani died at the compound. Leveille and the rest of the group believed the child would resurrect on Easter and lead the group to face society and kill those who did not join them.

In anticipation of the resurrection, the group engaged in significant firearms and tactical training. When Abdul Ghani did not resurrect on Easter, Leveille began to talk about him returning around the time of his birthday (Aug. 6, 2018) or as Subhanah Wahhaj’s soon-to-be born child.

Just days before Abdul’s birthday, the Taos County Sheriff’s Office’s Tactical Special Response Team (SRT) Unit integrated with agents from New Mexico Office of the Superintendent of Insurance and executed warrants on the heavily fortified compound. SRT was able to secure the compound and the suspects without incident or a single shot fired. Inside the compound, law enforcement found 11

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malnourished children, who were handed over to child protective services.

Prosecutors believe the compound was a facility for training the children to carry out school shootings. While it was heavily fortified, there was no running water, no electricity, and very little in the way of food.

Authorities found Abdul's body in an underground tunnel. The investigation found that Abdul died on Christmas Eve in 2017. An exact cause of death was never determined but prosecutors claimed that the boy, who had frequent seizures, had been deprived of crucial medication.

During the trial, the defendants argued that the case was the product of "government overreach" and that they were targeted because they are Muslim. The prosecutors successfully countered by proving the ground conducted the training with the intent to "face the nation" and kill those who refused to believe as they did. They spoke of waging jihad and becoming martyrs.

Leveille, who had faced up to 17 years in prison under her plea agreement, was sentenced to 15 years since she has been receiving treatment for a diagnosis of acute schizophrenia that followed her arrest in 2018.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kimberly Brawley and Tavo Hall for the District of New Mexico and Trial Attorneys Jessica Joyce and George Kraehe of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section are prosecuting the case.