

# Rhode Island Man Arrested For Threatening Massachusetts Professor

A Rhode Island man was arrested Wednesday, April 24 and charged with sending a series of violent and threatening emails to a college professor in Massachusetts and to a professional school at the university where the professor teaches.

Matthew Haviland, 30, of North Kingstown, R.I., was charged by complaint with cyberstalking and with transmitting a threat in interstate commerce.

"As I have said before, this office will take a hard line on threats of violence motivated by politicized issues, regardless of whether those issues arise on the right or the left," said United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. "Americans are responsible for what they say, and if they put others in fear for their lives, we will prosecute."

"Simply put, words matter, and today's arrest of Matthew Haviland should serve as a warning to others who think they can use the internet to terrorize people. Don't do it," said Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division. "Everyone has the right to express their opinion, but when you threaten, harass, intimidate, and put others in fear for their lives, it's a federal crime."

Over the span of several hours on March 10, 2019, Haviland allegedly sent a Massachusetts professor a string of approximately 28 e-mails containing messages that included such threats as, "I will rip every limb from your body and eat it, piece by piece," and "I will bite through your eyeballs while you're still alive, and I will laugh while you scream." According to the complaint, the professor to whom Haviland

sent the threats—referred to as Victim 1 in the complaint—has published and spoken in favor of abortion rights, and several of Haviland's emails made reference to abortion. In two successive e-mails, for example, Haviland wrote, "You will be held accountable for every [expletive] baby you murdered through your horrible deception of they are not humans," and "You will have your face ripped off and eaten by me, personally. I will enjoy raping your body after you're dead. And that will only be the start."

The complaint includes a description of additional, abortion-related messages Haviland is alleged to have sent or posted on the internet. Those messages included approximately 114 voice messages that Haviland left overnight at a women's medical center beginning April 4, 2019, and text messages Haviland sent to an acquaintance that included the following: "It never was a Woman's rights issue. It's literally killing babies. That's All it is, and We want you to stop it. Or we will kill you to do it. It's that Serious. It's not a Joke." In an internet posting allegedly written on March 29, 2019, Haviland wrote, "You guys are so evil and so brainwashed, I would kill every one of you with my bare hands—or AT LEAST kill every abortion doctor."

It is alleged that between the evening of March 15, 2019, and the early morning of March 16, 2019, Haviland sent approximately 12 e-mails to a professional school at Victim 1's university. These e-mails touched on the subjects of race, gender, and physical disability, and included the messages: "[Expletive], my existence is not a blight on society. Yours is, for pushing the idea that if you are able-bodied or white or okay WITH THE [EXPLETIVE] GENDER YOU WERE BORN WITH, you are a bad person. You people are Evil, putrid, and somebody shoudl [sic] BOMB your school for spreading the idea that it's okay to HATE people because of their race." A later e-mail to the professional school said only, "You should be Murdered in cold blood."

The charges of cyberstalking and transmitting a threat in interstate commerce provide for a sentence of no greater than five years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss resulting from the offense, whichever is greater, and restitution. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

U.S. Attorney Lelling and FBI SAC Bonavolonta made the announcement today. Boston FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force is conducting the investigations with the assistance of Warwick and North Kingstown (R.I.) Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian A. Pérez Daple of Lelling's National Security Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.