

Texas Man Charged with Kidnapping and Stalking Appears in Massachusetts Federal Court

A Texas man arrested and charged in September 2019, made his first appearance in federal court in Springfield Monday, November for kidnapping and stalking.

Sunil K. Akula, 30, was arraigned in federal court in Springfield today on charges of kidnapping and stalking. Akula was detained and transported to the District of Massachusetts after being arrested on Sept. 27, 2019.

According to charging documents, on Aug. 6, 2019, Akula traveled from his home in Texas to Agawam, Mass. to confront his wife, from whom he was living apart. A couple of days later, he physically assaulted his wife and forced her to leave her apartment, stating that he was taking her back to Texas. Akula held his wife's phone, wallet, and computer, and forced her into his car with only the clothes she was wearing.

Akula allegedly then drove his wife south through many states, during which time he again assaulted her, forced her to send a resignation e-mail to her employer, and smashed her laptop and threw it on the side of the highway. Akula stopped at a Knox County, Tenn. hotel, where he again beat his wife. When Akula could not quiet his wife or stop her from crying loudly, Akula opened the door to leave the hotel room, where he was met and arrested by officers of the Knox County Sheriff's Office.

The charge of kidnapping provides for a sentence of up to life prison, five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of stalking provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and

a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; Chicopee Police Chief William R. Jebb; Agawam Police Chief Eric Gillis; Knox County Sheriff Tom Spangler; and Plano (Texas) Interim Police Chief Dan Curtis made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Deepika Bains Shukla, Chief of Lelling's Springfield Branch Office, is prosecuting the case.

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