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## **Louisiana Man Sentenced For Nooses Targeting “Jena Six” Marchers**

**ALEXANDRIA, LA** - Grace Chung Becker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, and Donald W. Washington, United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, today announced that Jeremiah Munsen, 19, of Pineville, Louisiana, was sentenced to four months in prison for his role in using nooses to threaten marchers who participated in the “Jena Six” civil rights rally. In addition to the four-month prison term, Munsen received one year of supervised release and 125 hours of community service.

On September 20, 2007, in an incident that garnered national media attention, Munsen and another person allegedly attached the nooses to the back of a pickup truck and repeatedly drove slowly and menacingly past a large group of African American individuals who had gathered at a bus depot in Alexandria, Louisiana, after attending the civil rights rally in Jena.

The defendant pleaded guilty April 25, 2008, admitting that he displayed two large, life-sized nooses from the back of his pickup truck with the intent to frighten and intimidate the demonstrators. He and the other person with him hung the nooses in a manner so as to be clearly visible to the gathered demonstrators, and Munsen then drove past the group two or three times while the other person glared out the window at the demonstrators. Munsen further admitted that he and the other person had previously discussed the Ku Klux Klan and how they thought the Klan would have responded to the rally in Jena, and he acknowledged that the Jena Six rally followed extensive public discussion regarding, among other things, the history of racial lynchings in the United States and the perception that a noose, when displayed in a racial context, constituted a symbol of racial violence.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Grace Chung Becker said, “The defendant used a threatening and offensive tactic to intimidate peaceful civil rights marchers who were in Louisiana to rally against racial intolerance. The Civil Rights Division will continue to vigorously pursue racially motivated threats that violate federal law.”

United States Attorney Donald W. Washington said, “The defendant committed a federal hate crime by using a powerful symbol of hate to intimidate a group of interstate travelers because of their race. It is a violation of federal law to intimidate, oppress, injure or threaten people because of their race and because those people are exercising and enjoying rights guaranteed and protected by the laws and Constitution of the United States. Our civil rights laws protect the civil rights of all Americans, and they emphasize the reality that we are all members of one particular race – the human race.”

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Alexandria Police Department investigated this case, which was prosecuted jointly by the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice and the United States Attorney’s Office.

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