



**WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION**  
Marriage|Family|Life|Liberty

**Victim Statement**

***United States v. Hridindu Sankar Roychowdhury, 3:23-cr-00031, (W.D. Wis.)***

My name is Julaine K. Appling. I was president of Wisconsin Family Action/Wisconsin Family Council during the crime in question and up until late February of this year, when I became president emeritus. As president emeritus, I am still an employee of the organization and have the authority to issue this statement.

On Sunday morning, May 8, 2022, Mother's Day, somewhere around 8:30 a.m., I was helping prepare a ladies' brunch for the women in our church. My phone rang and showed it was from one of our Wisconsin Family Action team members. She informed me the management team for our office building in Madison had contacted her about a break-in at our office and that I was to call management immediately, which I did.

Building management told me it wasn't a break-in but rather that someone in the early morning hours had tried to start a fire in my personal office space after throwing 2 Molotov cocktails at and through the window. I was also told graffiti had been written on exterior walls.

By this time, local law enforcement was looking for me because Madison police had not been able to find me. I met a Watertown police officer at my home after immediately leaving church to handle this news. The Watertown officer gave me a Madison police department number to call, which I did en route to Madison. This officer filled me in on some of the details but would not tell me what the graffiti message was; I guessed rightly, however. I was told that local law enforcement and others would be at the office shortly after I got there.

Driving up to the office, I first saw the graffiti—"If abortions aren't safe, then you aren't either"—on one wall and anarchist symbols on another exterior wall. The threat was clear. No one on our team was safe.

Inside, the acrid smell was obvious clear at the other end of the building. Walking into our office, I could see through to my office—two large windows with plywood covering them. Glass everywhere in my office, literally on every surface. Burned books on the floor. Furniture destroyed. A wall below the window burned out. It looked like a warzone. And the air was filled with the smell of the fire and the chemicals used to extinguish the fire.

That scene is emblazoned on my mind. But what is even more indelibly imprinted on my mind is the reality that at least one person and likely more than one so disagreed with what we believe and the work we do to strengthen, preserve, and promote what we believe, that they resorted to violence, complete with an overt written threat on our very lives. They intended, at a minimum, to destroy where we work and wanted us to know we had better be watching our back because they were coming for us.

We were very fortunate that the Molotov cocktails did not detonate as they might have and that the fire set was seen by a passerby, or it is likely that at least the entire end of the whole office building would have been destroyed. We were further very fortunate that no one was in our office and, as far as we know, no one was in the building.

That said, it is still true that that Sunday set in motion many changes for Wisconsin Family Action and Wisconsin Family Council. My first responsibility was to secure the safety of our staff. We immediately added security

measures to our office and hired an armed security guard to be with us while we were in the office and at events for the first week or so. We adjusted some of our regular schedules and practices to ensure no one worked alone in the office or at night. We immediately engaged 24/7-armed security for our teen camp which we held off-site in mid-July. The threat and the actual firebombing demanded all of this. We could not take a chance.

My office was uninhabitable. In fact, we had an expert come in to help with insurance issues, and he told me to stop going in there at all. I'd been giving interviews for 3 days in that office, walking on glass, answering questions, with reporters taking videos of the damage. The insurance advocate told me the air was highly toxic, and that we should immediately seal the office off, which we did, and began running air purifiers throughout the entire suite.

Clean up and repair took months, necessitating my being shuffled around the office to find space to work. For several months, no day went by without my having to deal with the firebombing in some way. It's now been nearly 2 years since the attack, and I still am dealing with it on a regular basis. Every time I check our security, set an alarm, close a blind, lock a door, or leave the office when it's dark, I am reminded of the reality that people who don't agree with us have resorted to very real violence in an attempt to scare us into silence. We've lost time and certainly lost a sense of security and safety.

Wisconsin Family Action and Wisconsin Family Council are not about revenge. We are about justice. Hridindu Roychowdhury's has pled guilty to the charges brought against him in this crime. I was in the courtroom in early December when he made his plea. However, just recently and subsequent to his guilty plea, we found out that Mr. Roychowdhury had paid for a subscription to [whitepages.com](https://www.whitepages.com) and had since early May 2022 through late September 2022, been getting updates from this subscription on one of our former employees and on me. This information heightened the reality that the threat was not an idle one. This knowledge changed my thinking somewhat related to how long of a prison sentence Mr. Roychowdhury should receive. His intent was to destroy property and maybe to actually do bodily harm to some of us. He succeeded in destroying property. He left no doubt as to why he did it as he wrote in large black letters that we, the staff of Wisconsin Family Action and Wisconsin Family Council, weren't safe. This was all purposeful and planned.

As a result of the above, I believe Mr. Roychowdhury should be sentenced to no less than 15 years of imprisonment. The law allows for 5 to 20 years. Before the [whitepages.com](https://www.whitepages.com) information became available, I was more settled on recommending 10 years in light of his accepting responsibility. But this [whitepages.com](https://www.whitepages.com) revelation made it very clear this was premeditated maliciousness, intending to terrorize us and potentially harm us. Fifteen years is not about revenge; it's about justice. Mr. Roychowdhury broke the law, he sought to destroy property, and maybe even harm individuals. Justice demands a penalty that is in keeping with the crime, and I believe 15 years of imprisonment accomplishes that.

Beyond the imprisonment, I also believe Mr. Roychowdhury should recompense the insurance company for the payout they made against our claim and should also pay Wisconsin Family Action/Wisconsin Family Council for any additional expenses incurred as a result of his crime.



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### **Victim Statement**

#### **United States v. Hridindu Sankar Roychowdhury, 3:32-cr-00031 (W.D. Wis.)**

My name is Christine M. File. I am the president of Wisconsin Family Action and Wisconsin Family Council (WFA/WFC) since February 2024. The violence perpetrated against these organizations and their employees is deplorable and has had far-reaching effects. I plead with the court to issue a stern sentence for justice and for deterrence.

Mr. Roychowdhury, the defendant, wanted to send a message. The way he chose to send his message was to firebomb the office of people promoting a message he did not agree with and to spray paint "If abortions aren't safe, then you aren't either". It was a threat that the defendant acted upon. WFC and WFA weren't safe. Its employees weren't safe. He actively continued to stalk employees online after the firebombing and before his capture.

Indeed, he sent his message. Julaine, president of WFA/WFC during the time of the bombing in 2022, has spoken of how this violent, targeted crime has impacted Wisconsin Family Council and Wisconsin Family Action, financially and operationally. She also recounts how it had a deep and personal influence on each person working for WFA/WFC at the time. This incident will influence this organization for the rest of its existence. It has and will impact WFC's future camp-attendees, future board members, future employees, and all their family members. It has affected each of these already. Truly, it had an impact on other state family policy councils around the country as well. This experience is literally seared into the fabric of the company and its people.

It impacts me today. Security and the real-life threat to my life was discussed during my hiring process—this is years later! And as a public figure—the face of the organization—and a woman, this threat has reverberations into my private life. I must weigh how this may affect not only myself but my husband and children. All because I—and others—work for an organization that peaceably exercises its right to free speech and free expression. This is a big deal. The bombing's negative impact to the professional and personal lives of many individuals and families cannot be overstated. And this violent, coordinated, pre-meditated threat cannot be allowed to inflict further harm on WFC, WFA, our employees, or our community.

Furthermore, this crime has far-reaching, terrible, and tangible reverberations to our greater civil society. This was a violent attack on free speech. This was an intentional attack on the free expression of one's religion. This was a calculated attack on the choice of people's chosen vocation. Fundamentally, it was an attack on principles at the

heart and soul of our civil society. This attack targeted beloved freedoms enjoyed by all. The expansiveness of the damage of the attack to our civil and diverse society also cannot be overstated. An attack on these freedoms in an attempt to silence their exercise by some is an attack on these freedoms for all.

This court now has the opportunity to respond to the defendant's violent message. And I urge it be a strongly deterrent one.

This court, as a minister of justice for the people of Wisconsin, should reply to Mr. Roychowdhury and all who would seek to follow in his footsteps that it will *not* tolerate this type of "cancelling"—that those who violently infringe others peaceful expression of their freedoms, that those who damage other's property, that those who threaten life will be prosecuted under and sentenced to the fullest extent of the law. Although each person has the ability to civilly disagree with his neighbor, no one has the right to perpetuate violence on his neighbor. No one. This is violence. Wisconsin will have none of it—not now, not ever. This is an opportunity for Wisconsin to set a precedent deterring this type of violent criminal behavior in the future and to be an example in defending these fundamental rights for all. Government is instituted to secure the rights of the governed, and in Wisconsin, lawless violence targeted against those with whom one disagrees—especially for fervently held religious beliefs—will be met with the full force of the lawful penalty enacted by the legislature. Wisconsinites should know they are safe in the peaceful exercise of their rights of free speech, free expression, and the freedom to choose their vocation.

I do not seek revenge. I do seek justice. Although accepting a plea deal is a mitigating circumstance, I'd urge this court to consider the many aggravating facts and circumstances of this case and sentence the defendant to 17+ years for the intentional threatened and actual damage to life, property, and liberty he's inflicted on the community.

In addition to any prison time, the defendant should make every party negatively affected by his actions whole. He should pay costs incurred as a result of rectifying the damage to the property, whether to the insurance, landlord, or otherwise. He should also pay for extra expenses incurred as a result of the crime, i.e., extra security measures implemented or continuing by WFC (like a security guard at our youth camp every summer) or the building, mental health or other counseling for staff, etc.

I would also request ankle monitoring after he gets out of prison and a restraining order that he stay away from any WFC or WFA office or events, personnel or past personnel, board members or past board members, or family members of any of the proceeding people for a reasonable period, possibly indefinitely, after release from prison. Furthermore, he should not be allowed to use tools to stalk WFC, WFA, employees, contractors, board members, or anyone else associated with the companies or their family members. He should not be allowed any materials or weapons that could inflict similar harm on others once released.