

Former K&L Gates Attorney Sentenced to 24 Months in Prison for Cyberstalking



A former partner at the U.S. law firm K&L Gates, Willie Dennis, was sentenced to two years in prison by a Manhattan federal judge on Friday. Dennis was convicted of three counts of cyberstalking in October 2022 after sending harassing and threatening messages to former law partners and colleagues at the firm. The cyberstalking campaign began in 2018 and escalated after he was fired the following year.

According to prosecutors, Dennis's threatening messages caused one person at the firm to leave New York and move to another state. Another individual had to upgrade his home security system and sleep with a loaded gun beside his bed for fear of the messages. Manhattan U.S. Attorney Damian Williams expressed relief for the victims, stating, "The sentence imposed today ensures that Dennis's victims will no longer needlessly endure his attacks."

The sentencing occurred in the Southern District of New York and was presided over by U.S. District Judge Jed Rakoff. Prosecutors sought a four-and-a-half-year sentence for Dennis. However, the defense argued that he should receive credit for time served and be placed on supervised release.

Dennis's lawyer, David Cohen, stated in a court filing that Dennis was remorseful for his actions resulting from a difficult personal period and mounting frustration over his treatment at the firm. Dennis is Black and sued K&L Gates for racial discrimination and retaliation in November 2020, claiming that he was wrongly fired for raising concerns about alleged race and gender bias at the firm. K&L Gates has denied these allegations both publicly and in court.

The discrimination lawsuit was put on hold pending the outcome of arbitration proceedings between Dennis and the firm. The arbitration proceedings were also put on hold due to the criminal case.

It is not uncommon for individuals to feel frustrated and upset after losing their job, but it is essential to handle these emotions healthily and legally. Threatening messages and cyberstalking are illegal and can result in severe consequences. This case serves as a warning to individuals that such actions will not be tolerated and highlights the importance of seeking help for emotional distress and managing emotions healthily and legally.

REFERENCES:

Ex-K&L Gates partner gets two-year prison term for cyberstalking