

Law enforcement authorities investigating threats against judge overseeing lawsuit involving Alex Jones and Sandy Hook families

By DAVE ALTIMARI | HARTFORD COURANT

Jones' attorney *Norm Pattis* told the judge Tuesday he was "frankly flabbergasted" by Jones' anger, then sought to explain it. "Mr Jones is a conspiracy theorist," Pattis said. "He believes people are out to get him. And guess what? There are.



Infowars founder Alex Jones at a hearing before the House Judiciary committee on Capitol Hill Dec. 11, 2018 in Washington, D.C.

State and federal law enforcement authorities are investigating threats made against the Superior Court judge overseeing the civil case involving the families of Sandy Hook victims and controversial radio show host Alex Jones.

"In the interest of full disclosure

to all parties, the court was contacted by the Connecticut State Police, who were reportedly contacted by the FBI regarding threats against the undersigned made by individuals on the defendant Infowars website," Judge Barbara Bellis said. "The court

has no further information in that regard and plans to take no further action, however, the court believes it is required to disclose the matter to all parties."

Bellis is the judge overseeing the lawsuit filed against Jones, a far-right conspiracy theorist

who hosts the Infowars internet radio program. Sources said the threats against Bellis were made following a hearing earlier this week when she sanctioned Jones for his on-air attack of attorney Christopher Mattei of the firm of Koskoff, Koskoff & Beider, which is representing the victims' families.

It was unclear Friday what the nature of the threats were against Bellis.

"It was an intentional, calculated act of rage for his viewing audience," Bellis ruled Tuesday following an emergency court hearing held after Jones made comments about Mattei.

"Whether it was an act or real rage is not relevant," the judge said. "It's unacceptable and sanctionable."

At the hearing, Bellis barred Jones' lawyers from pursuing any special motions to dismiss the lawsuit by the Sandy Hook families. She also ordered Jones to pay lawyers' fees in connection with the discovery of child pornography attached to emails sent to Jones and his Infowars website that were turned over to the Sandy Hook lawyers as part of the discovery process in the case.

Bellis also set a trial date for November 2020 for the case.

A lawyer for Jones sought to downplay the comments Jones made while broadcasting on

his website on June 14 and 15, during which he attacked Mattei. Their lawsuit alleges that Jones has profited from spreading the story that the shooting was a hoax. The lawsuit accuses Jones of orchestrating a sustained attack on the families that lasted for years, accusing family members of being actors, stating as fact that the shooting was a hoax and inciting others to act on those claims all because it was good for his ratings, drew advertisers and made him money.

Emails Jones delivered to the Sandy Hook lawyers through discovery were analyzed by a consultant, who later discovered the child pornography, William Bloss, a Koskoff attorney told the judge. The law firm notified the FBI and the defense lawyers, Bloss said.

On his show June 14, Jones revealed the existence of the child pornography in the discovery materials and went on to accuse Mattei and the Koskoff firm of planting the images in the emails. Bellis also ruled that Jones made threatening comments toward Mattei and the firm.

During the program, Jones used threatening language and repeatedly mentioned Mattei. "What nice people. Chris Mattei. Chris Mattei," Jones said on the air, pounding a picture of Mattei with his fist. "Let's zoom in on Chris Mattei. Oh, nice

little Chris Mattei. What a good American. What a good boy. You think you'll put on me, what ... I'm gonna kill ... Anyway, I'm done! Total war! You want it, you got it!"

An FBI analysis of the email and the attached child pornography determined that it was sent to Jones from outside his organization and that no one ever opened the files to view the images, Bloss and Norm Pattis, Jones' primary defense attorney in Connecticut, said. About a dozen images were contained in the nearly 70,000 emails reviewed by a consultant hired by the Sandy Hook lawyers.

Bloss told Bellis that "there is no way to interpret what Mr. Jones said on Friday as anything but a threat." Bloss said his firm has received threats since Jones' outburst on Friday, and hired an off-duty Bridgeport police officer to stand watch in the law office lobby.

Jones attorney Norm Pattis told the judge Tuesday he was "frankly flabbergasted" by Jones' anger, then sought to explain it. "Mr Jones is a conspiracy theorist," Pattis said. "He believes people are out to get him. And guess what? There are."

Pattis insisted, however, that Jones' comments were speech protected by the First Amendment. He also insisted that Jones did not threaten Mattei.

“He mentioned Mr. Mattei by name and it was uncomfortable and it was unpleasant and I will concede that,” Pattis said. “But it was no threat.”

Bellis did not accept Pattis’ explanation. “The 20-minute deliberate tirade and harassment and intimidation against Attorney Mattei and his firm is unacceptable and sanctionable,” she said.

“If Mr. Jones truly believed that Attorney Mattei or anyone else in the Koskoff firm planted child pornography trying to frame him, the proper course of action would be to contact the authorities and/or have your attorney file the appropriate motions,” the judge said. “What is not appropriate, what is indefensible, unconscionable, despicable and possibly criminal behavior is to accuse opposing counsel, through a broadcast no less, of planting child pornography, which is a serious felony, and to continue with the accusations in a tirade or rant for approximately 20 minutes or so.”

Jones is being sued by several victims of the Sandy Hook school massacre. They are alleging he and his company have profited from spreading the story that the shooting was a hoax. He hired Pattis to represent him in Connecticut after Judge Bellis grew frustrated that Jones wasn’t complying with simple discovery

requests and threatened to sanction Jones. ■