

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* CALIFORNIA

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Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

San Diego Man Charged with Aiming a Laser Pointer at Police Helicopter During a Protest

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – October 20, 2020

SAN DIEGO – An indictment was unsealed in federal court today charging San Diego resident Stephen Glenn McLeod with knowingly aiming the beam of a laser pointer at an aircraft on August 28, 2020.

McLeod was arraigned in federal court today. At the hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Shapiro told U.S. Magistrate Allison Goddard that McLeod is alleged to have pointed a laser pointer at a San Diego Police Department helicopter multiple times while participating in a protest on August 28, 2020.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Goddard set a personal appearance bond of \$35,000, guaranteed by two financial responsible adults. The next hearing is scheduled for November 20, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. before U.S. District Court Judge Janis Sammartino.

"We support everyone's right to peacefully assemble and protest. Aiming a laser pointer at a police helicopter, however, is highly dangerous and a serious violation of federal law," said U.S. Attorney Robert Brewer.

"When aimed at an aircraft, a beam of light from a handheld laser can illuminate a cockpit, disorienting and temporarily blinding the pilots," said Suzanne Turner, Special Agent in Charge of FBI San Diego. "It's a federal felony that the FBI and our law enforcement partners take very seriously."

DEFENDANT

Case Number 20CR3106JLS

Stephen Glenn McLeod

Age: 38

San Diego

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Aiming a Laser Pointer at an Aircraft – Title 18, United States Code, Section 39A

Maximum penalty: Five years in prison, \$250,000 fine

AGENCY

San Diego Police Department

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Joint Terrorism Task Force

*The charges and allegations contained in an indictment or complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Component(s):

USAO - California, Southern

Contact:

Assistant U.S. Attorneys John Parmley (619) 546-7957 and
Jonathan Shapiro (619) 546-8225

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