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I'M SORRY, MR. PRESIDENT

John Brek, The Man Accused Of Threatening Obama, Released From Prison, Speaks Exclusively To CBS 2 HD



Reporting
[Lou Young](#)

NEWARK (CBS) — Fresh off a month at the Essex County Jail and fired from his job for what appear to have been misconstrued comments about President Barack Obama, John Brek was free about 15 minutes when CBS 2 HD spoke with him at his attorney's office Thursday afternoon. The new suit he was wearing was a sharp contrast to the drab jailhouse fatigues he wore in court that morning.

In the exclusive interview, the 50-year-old Linden bachelor twitched and seemed visibly distressed as he described life in protective custody at the county jail in Newark.

"I wouldn't wish it on nobody," he said. "You can't sleep, can't eat. I lost a tremendous amount of weight. Trying to sit in that 4-by-7 room and rock yourself to sleep, wondering what they were saying about you on the outside."

Brek was arrested during President Obama's trip to New Jersey last month. The uniformed security guard was reported as making threatening comments at an outdoor lunch cart, but Brek has steadfastly denied it ever happened.

"No threat involved at all," he insisted. "Nobody was threatened. Nothin'. There was no reason to threaten anybody. I was just going out to have a gyro and a juice for lunch break."

The comments that got Brek arrested had to do with felt paper screening that had been applied to the cyclone fencing adjacent to the area where Air Force One would taxi. Brek said he made reference to holes cut in the paper as a security risk, but the prosecutor said the context of his comments were more disturbing than the words themselves, which is what drove the bystanders to report him to police.

Kieth Harvest, the chief assistant Essex County prosecutor said, "It was pretty clear he had a bias against certain ethnic groups, one of which the president happens to be of."

Federal authorities never touched the case, but Harvest said he had no choice but keep Brek in jail on heavy bail until it was clear there was no danger. The prisoner's extensive gun collection seemed to confirm the possible danger, but late last week the charges against Brek were abruptly dropped in exchange for his plea of guilty to minor harassment charges. Although jail time is rare for what are considered "disorderly persons" charges like harassment, the maximum penalty is six months behind bars.

Brek was released Thursday for time served: 29 days.

His lawyer said he thinks Brek was incarcerated simply because he is a gun owner.

"He should've never been arrested," Moses Rambarren said after his client's release. "There was no true threat to kill the president."

Brek was fired from his security job and his extensive gun collection remains in a police evidence locker.

Asked what he would say to President Obama if given the chance, Brek said simply, "I'm sorry this happened. I'm not trying to kill you, or anyone for that fact."

Brek's attorney filed a formal motion to return his client's collection of 43 weapons, and to lift the restraining order that requires him to avoid any proximity to the President of the United States.



◀ 1 of 1 ▶ [Click to enlarge](#)

John Brek, formerly a private security guard from New Jersey, was initially charged with making terroristic threats against the president.
CBS

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