

UpFront: Kaul discusses investigation into killing of retired judge

Posted on Monday, Jun 13, 2022

Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul says the suspect accused of shooting and killing retired Juneau County Judge John Roemer illegally possessed the firearm used in the killing.

“My understanding is he was prohibited from legally possessing a firearm based on having been convicted of a felony, so one of the issues is going to be how he was able to do that,” Kaul said on WISN’s “UpFront,” which is produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Investigators say 56-year-old Douglas Uhde shot and killed Roemer inside his home before shooting himself.

Roemer sentenced Uhde to six years in prison in 2005.

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Kaul said no other known connections between the two have surfaced.

“The judge was one of the folks who was the target of the suspect, and the obvious connection here is that court case,” Kaul said. “So it certainly appears that court case was a motivating factor, if not the sole reason this happened.”

A law enforcement source said Uhde had a hit list in his vehicle with as many as 13 names including Gov. Tony Evers, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

“There does appear to be some sort of connection to one or more cases,” Kaul said.

“There are some other folks who have some sort of connection to the legal process, but the overall connection to all the people, that is something we continue to assess, and that’s part of what we hope to learn more about as the investigation moves forward.”

Also on the show, U.S. District Judge Esther Salas from New Jersey discusses her efforts to press Congress and state legislatures to pass legislation to better protect judges.

“My reaction is heartache,” Salas said referring to Romer’s death. “I just was afraid of this from the moment that my family was brutally attacked on July 19, 2020. The biggest fear Mark and I have had to date was that somebody else would die and hearing the news of Judge Roemer and his assassination opened up a wound that will never heal.”

Nearly two years ago a gunman dressed like a delivery driver attempted to assassinate Salas. The former disgruntled attorney, who once appeared in her courtroom, killed her son and wounded her husband inside their New Jersey home.

Salas is now renewing her push to Congress to pass the Daniel Anderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act.

Named after her son, the legislation would allow federal judges to remove personally identifiable information from the internet and create a grant program and incentives for states to enact laws to protect circuit court judges.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., has blocked the legislation because it doesn’t include members of Congress.

“This is an issue that has bipartisan support,” Salas said. “It’s bipartisan, it’s bicameral, and I personally have heard from many Senators both Democrats and Republicans and Independents who support this bill, so it’s unclear why we can’t get this bill passed.”

In another segment, former Republican U.S. Rep. Reid Ribble discusses a letter signed he signed urging Republicans to cooperate with the Jan. 6 committee investigating the attack on the U.S. Capitol.

“If in fact, they’re wanting their side of the story put out there, well go and tell it,” said the former Green Bay-area congressman. “If there’s some alternative reality

here that we're not seeing and there's something different that happened that they know about that would make this look illegitimate, why don't they go ahead and provide that information to the American people so that they can hear that side of the story, but apparently they're not wanting to do that."

More public hearings are scheduled this week.

One future hearing, committee members said, will focus on former President Trump's pressure on state legislatures to change the election results and have a group of "false electors" including in Wisconsin, sent to Congress.

"It certainly was unscrupulous but whether it rose to the level of a crime or not, I think it was uncertain," Ribble said. "I think Congress or the state of Wisconsin may respond with some election reforms that would prevent something like that from happening in the future."

See more from the show:

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