

Republican U.S. Congressman Grimm to be indicted, lawyer says

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USPA News - Federal prosecutors intend to bring criminal charges against Michael Grimm, a Republican U.S. congressman from New York who has been at the center of a federal campaign finance investigation for more than two years, his lawyer said on late Friday. Attorney William McGinley said the U.S. Attorney's Office in New York City had disclosed its intent to file criminal charges against Grimm.

A person briefed on the case told the Washington Post that Grimm had already been indicted by a grand jury, but details of the charges were not yet known. The indictment is expected to be unsealed next week. "After more than two years of investigation plagued by malicious leaks, violations of grand jury secrecy, and strong-arm tactics, the U.S. Attorney's Office has disclosed its intent to file criminal charges against Congressman Grimm," McGinley said in an e-mailed statement. "We are disappointed by the government's decision, but hardly surprised." McGinley accused the government of having pursued a "politically driven vendetta" against the congressman, who made headlines in January after he physically threatened a reporter who asked about the investigation. He later defended his actions, calling the reporter's question "disrespectful and a cheap shot." Grimm, who is a Republican representative for New York's 11th congressional district, has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. "When the dust settles, he will be vindicated," McGinley said in the e-mail, adding that Grimm will continue to serve his constituents "with the same dedication and tenacity that has characterized his lifetime of public service." The U.S. Justice Department refused to comment on the case on late Friday. Grimm has been at the center of a federal investigation since early 2012, and the House Ethics Committee announced in November 2013 that the congressman was under investigation for possible campaign finance violations. Diana Durand, a Texas woman who was a friend and fundraiser for Grimm, was charged in January with illegally funneling more than \$10,000 into his 2010 campaign. The investigation came into the public spotlight in January when Grimm made threats after walking off an interview with NY1 reporter Michael Scotto. The interview had been arranged at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. to allow Grimm to voice his views on President Barack Obama's annual 'State of the Union' address, which had concluded earlier that evening. "And just finally before we let you go, we haven't had a chance to talk about some of the..." Scotto said before Grimm cut him off. "I'm not speaking to you about anything that is off-topic, this is only about the president's speech," the lawmaker responded, before walking off camera. But after Scotto wrapped up his segment for NY1, Grimm suddenly walked back to the reporter and began to threaten him, with the camera still rolling. "Let me be clear to you. If you ever do that to me again, I'll throw you off this f*cking balcony," Grimm can be heard saying in the recording. The New York lawmaker then walked off again as Scotto tried to explain that he was only asking him a question, which prompted Grimm to return once again. "Why? Why? It was a valid question," the reporter said, to which Grimm responded: "No, no. You're not man enough, you're not man enough. I'll break you in half. Like a boy." In a statement released the following morning, Grimm defended his actions, saying he was doing the New York 24-hour news channel "a favor" by allowing an interview with him. "The reporter knew that I was in a hurry and was only there to comment on the State of the Union, but insisted on taking a disrespectful and cheap shot at the end of the interview, because I did not have time to speak off-topic," he said. Grimm added: "I verbally took the reporter to task and told him off, because I expect a certain level of professionalism and respect, especially when I go out of my way to do that reporter a favor. I doubt that I am the first Member of Congress to tell off a reporter, and I am sure I won't be the last."

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