

Grand Island man charged with making threats against congressmen

By [Phil Fairbanks](#) | Published August 2, 2018 | Updated August 2, 2018

A voicemail message promising an "eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" led to the arrest Wednesday of a Grand Island man. Carlos Bayon, 63, is accused of making threats against two out-of-state congressmen, one in Louisiana, the other in Washington, and prosecutors believe his motive may be rooted in the national debate over immigration. U.S. Attorney James P. Kennedy Jr. would not comment but, when asked if immigration was a factor, he said, "I think that's a reasonable interpretation."

A native of Puerto Rico, Bayon is charged with interstate communication of a threat and faces up to five years in prison. Prosecutors declined to talk about Bayon's past, but a 2005 story in The Buffalo News indicates he won a \$601,000 judgment from the state after suing the University at Buffalo.

A student at UB, Bayon claimed at the time that unfair treatment from faculty members made it impossible for him to earn his doctorate in anthropology. The award was believed to be the largest such verdict awarded to a former student of the state university system. "I cried when I heard the verdict," Bayon said at the time. "I felt like 10,000 pounds were lifted off my shoulders." In his lawsuit, Bayon accused members of the UB anthropology department of giving him low grades in retaliation for his decision to file discrimination complaints against them.

Unlike the allegations he levied against UB, the charges against Bayon are criminal. Prosecutors say his voicemail messages to the unidentified congressmen included threats in English and Spanish and were eventually traced back to his home in Grand Island. "Make no mistake. You will pay," Bayon is accused of saying in one of his messages.

The FBI, which searched Bayon's home in Grand Island, says it seized evidence that indicate his threats were credible. "Constitutional protections do not extend to threatening phone calls," Gary Loeffert, special agent in charge of the FBI in Buffalo, said of Bayon. Kennedy said the investigation into Bayon, which is being led by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul E. Bonanno, is ongoing.

In his 2005 interview with The News, Bayon said he is in "constant pain" because of knee, back and neck injuries that resulted from a violent robbery and assault in Miami years earlier. At the time, he said he was unemployed and collecting state disability payments. He also said he had an undergraduate degree in sociology from UB.