

Judge splits verdict on charges against YouTuber Lee Croddy

SAN RAMON — Lee Croddy, host of YouTube channel The Right Choice of News, was found not guilty of aiding and abetting a first degree burglary committed by Remi Montoya and guilty of being an accessory after the fact to a felony committed by Montoya by Judge Mike Chamberlain on Tuesday.

Montoya burglarized the home of investigator Drew Marshak to steal a briefcase that contained classified information related to UFOs on Feb. 15, 2020. The prosecution argued that Croddy aided and abetted the burglary because she gave Montoya the name and address of Marshak.

However, the defense argued that Croddy was not aware Montoya would rob Marshak's home, based on the fact that Croddy had acquired other UFO-related documents previously without coercion, and expected Montoya to similarly acquire Marshak's briefcase without violence.

"I didn't want Remi to break into Marshak's house whatsoever," testified Mrs. Croddy. "I have obtained documents nonviolently in the past, so I assumed [Remi] could do the same."

Sociologist Dr. Jes Beaart, who studies activism, testified she thought Montoya had committed the burglary on his own volition.

"It was Remi who decided to rob the house," testified Dr. Beaart. "It was Remi who separated her adoration for Lee from the reality of her actions, and acted independently from Lee to show dedication for the cause they shared."

Montoya was a fan of The Right Choice of News, a channel where Croddy claims to reveal secrets the government is hiding, and had met Croddy several times before at meet-and-greets. He was asked by Croddy to procure the UFO documents as part of a video series she was creating on her channel.

The prosecution argued that Croddy was an accessory to Montoya's burglary because Croddy had allowed him to spend the night at Croddy's home on Feb. 15 while she was aware he had committed burglary.

According to Officer Max Bird, Croddy asked "Oh God, what did Remi do? What did Remi take?" when Montoya was being arrested at the Croddy residence. The prosecution used this to assert that Croddy knew that Montoya had robbed Marshak's home the day before.

Eric Sullivan, Croddy's agent, testified he didn't believe Croddy's demeanour after the burglary indicated that he thought Montoya had committed burglary.

“It’s typical for Lee to have interactions like this with fans,” Sullivan testified in reference to a meet-and-greet Croddy hosted the day of Montoya’s burglary.

The prosecution argued Croddy had deliberately arranged the timing of the meet-and-greet on Feb. 15 to allow her to aid Montoya in avoiding arrest.

“This meet-and-greet couldn’t have come at a better time,” said Croddy to Montoya and others in a Twitter group chat on Feb. 12.

After Montoya was arrested, Croddy told Officer Bird “[Remi] took things way too far”, though the defense successfully motioned to suppress this evidence during pretrial because it was acquired through an interrogation that violated Croddy’s Fifth Amendment rights.

Croddy was arrested for the two charges on Feb. 23, one week after Montoya was taken into custody.