PRESS RELEASE

Studio City Man Arrested for Allegedly Causing Fireworks to Be Shot from In-Flight Helicopter in Video He Directed for YouTube Channel

Thursday, June 6, 2024

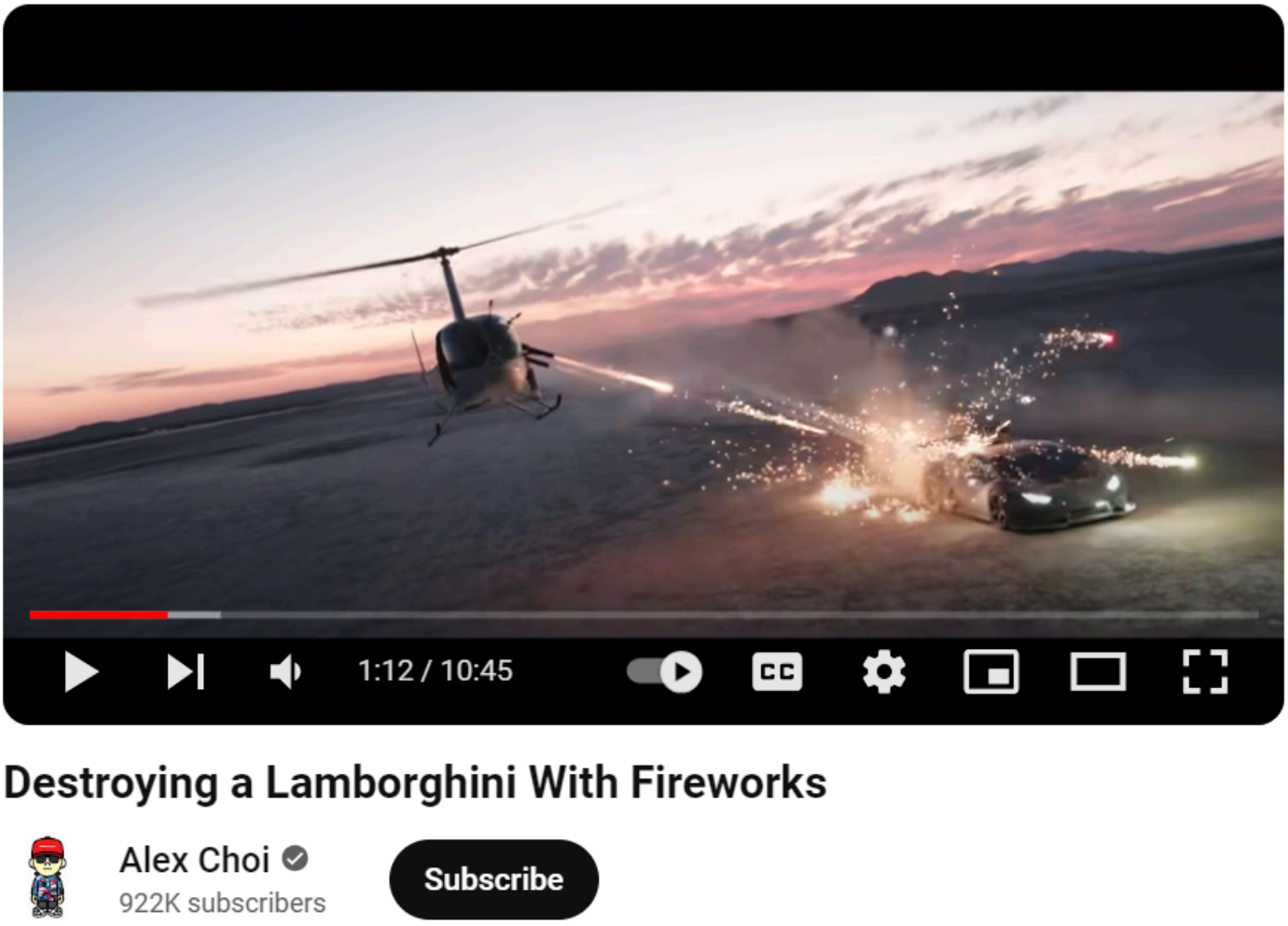
For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of California

LOS ANGELES – A San Fernando Valley man has been arrested on a federal criminal complaint alleging he directed a YouTube video in which two women in a helicopter – flying near the ground and without filming permits – repeatedly shot fireworks at a Lamborghini sportscar last year in San Bernardino County, the Justice Department announced today.

Suk Min Choi, 24, a.k.a. "Alex Choi," of Studio City, is charged with one count of causing the placement of an explosive or incendiary device on an aircraft. Choi is scheduled to make his initial appearance this afternoon in United States District Court in downtown Los Angeles. He was arrested on Wednesday and his arraignment is expected in the coming weeks.

According to an affidavit filed with the complaint, on July 4, 2023, Choi posted on his YouTube channel a video entitled, “Destroying a Lamborghini with Fireworks.” In the video, Choi allegedly presses a “fire missiles” button while two women are in a helicopter, shooting fireworks at a speeding Lamborghini sportscar. Law enforcement believes the video was shot on the El Mirage Dry Lakebed in San Bernardino County.



Screenshot of YouTube video from the complaint affidavit in *USA v. Choi*. Credit: DOT-OIG

After shooting what appears to be a live-action version of a fictionalized video game scene, the video transitions to a behind-the-scenes look at how Choi shot the first third of the video. During this portion of the video, Choi allegedly makes various references to himself coordinating the shoot. Specifically, the video states that Choi directed it. In the video, Choi thanks

a camera company for “being a part of my crazy stupid ideas.” He also allegedly said in the video that the group who helped make the video “[expletive] up” at one point “because I forgot to tell my friend how to use a torch.”

Finally, as noted in the affidavit, during the video it appears Choi made the decision to end filming when someone asked if they would film again, stating, “No, that’s it. We’re out of fireworks, right?”

In other parts of the video, Choi is seen next to the helicopter, holding what appears to be a firework, according to the affidavit.

Law enforcement believes that Choi committed the offense sometime in June 2023, that he did not have a permit to film a shoot using fireworks on a helicopter, and that he purchased the fireworks in Nevada because they were illegal in California.

A complaint is merely an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

If convicted, Choi would face a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years in federal prison.

The United States Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are investigating this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney Dominique Caamano of the Environmental Crimes and Consumer Protection Section is prosecuting this case.

Contact

Ciaran McEvoy
Public Information Officer
ciaran.mcevoy@usdoj.gov
(213) 894-4465