

Christian Heavy Metal Singer Pleads Guilty in California Murder Plot

The lead singer for the heavy metal Christian rock band As I Lay Dying pleaded guilty in California on Tuesday to a charge of soliciting an undercover detective posing as a hit man to kill his estranged wife.

Tim Lambesis, 33, entered the plea in a San Diego court as part of a deal that will net him a nine-year prison sentence, said his attorney, Thomas Warwick. Lambesis remains free on \$2 million bail until his May 2 sentencing hearing, Warwick said.

Lambesis had been in a custody dispute with his wife, Meggan, regarding their three adopted children when in May he asked a personal trainer at his gym if he knew anyone who could kill his wife, according to charging documents in the criminal case.

The trainer contacted the San Diego Sheriff's Department, which sent an undercover detective to meet with Lambesis.

Lambesis gave the detective \$1,000 in cash, a photo of his wife, her address and the security gate code, and suggested the killing be carried out on dates when he would be with his children and have an alibi, according to the documents.

Meggan Lambesis filed for divorce in September 2012. In seeking sole custody of their three children, she argued that Lambesis had become obsessed with body-building to the point of neglecting his children when they were with him, documents from the divorce case showed.

Lambesis "basically told the undercover agent that his wife was making things very difficult for him and he wanted her

gone,” City News Service quoted Deputy District Attorney Claudia Grasso as saying outside the court on Tuesday.

The San Diego County District Attorney’s Office confirmed in a statement that Lambesis pleaded guilty to a charge of solicitation of murder.

Lambesis has been ordered to stay away from his wife and children, to surrender his passport and to remain in San Diego County on GPS monitoring, according to the District Attorney’s Office statement.

After Lambesis’ arrest last May in Oceanside, north of San Diego, his attorney said at a court hearing last year that his client had been using steroids and that the drugs had dangerously altered his thinking.

The band As I Lay Dying, named after the classic novel by William Faulkner, has been on hiatus, according to their website.

The band was formed in 2000 and has released six albums of new material and two compilations. They have toured extensively, and their 2007 album *An Ocean Between Us* debuted at No. 8 on the *Billboard* 200 list.

Editing by Alex Dobuzinskis and Gunna Dickson

© 2014 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.