

# Supreme Court to consider Facebook threats case

December 1 2014, by Sam Hananel

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This Oct. 7, 2014, file photo shows a police officer dwarfed amid the marble columns of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington. Anthony Elonis claimed he was just kidding when he posted a series of graphically violent rap lyrics on Facebook about killing his estranged wife, shooting up a kindergarten class and attacking an FBI agent. But his wife didn't see it that way. Neither did a federal jury. In a far-reaching case that probes the limits of free speech over the Internet, the Supreme Court on Monday is considering whether Elonis' Facebook posts, and others like it, deserve protection under the First Amendment. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, File)

It's a First Amendment test for the Supreme Court in a case being heard Monday.

At issue are the free-speech rights of people who use violent or threatening language on Facebook and other [social media](#).

A Pennsylvania man was sentenced to nearly four years in prison for posting graphically violent rap lyrics on Facebook about killing his estranged wife, shooting up a kindergarten class and attacking an FBI agent.

The man says he was just venting his anger over a broken marriage and that he never meant to threaten anyone.

But a jury convicted him of violating a federal law that makes it a crime to threaten another person. A [federal appeals court](#) rejected his claim that his comments were protected by the First Amendment.

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