

Alleged UK hacker wins US extradition fight

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Lauri Love waves outside The Royal Courts of Justice in London, Monday, Feb. 5, 2018. The ruling in Lauri Love's appeal against extradition to the United States, where he faced solitary confinement and a potential 99 year prison sentence, was ruled in his favour on Monday Feb. 5 at the Royal Courts of Justice.(AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)

An alleged computer hacker from Britain won a court appeal Monday to block his extradition to the United States, where he faces charges in three states.

The High Court in London ruled against allowing Lauri Love to be extradited, although judges said it would still be possible to prosecute him in England.

Love, 32, has Asperger's syndrome and a depressive illness. His lawyers said it would be "unjust and oppressive" to send him to the U.S. to face trial.

U.S. officials requested Love's extradition on cyber-hacking charges alleging he compromised government networks between October 2012 and October 2013 and stole data.

The decision in his favor Monday was greeted with cheers in the courtroom.

Love said outside the London courthouse he hopes his case spurs discussion about how people with mental health issues are handled by the justice system.

"This decision is important for the appropriate administration of criminal justice and also for the humanitarian accommodation of people whose brains work differently," he said.

He criticized prosecutors for suggesting his mental issues were fabricated, saying that only served to stigmatize people with similar problems.

Love is alleged to have stolen large quantities of data from various American agencies, including the Department of Defense, the Federal Reserve and NASA, and the U.S. Army.



Lauri Love smiles as he leaves with parents Alexander Love, left, Sirkka-Liisa Love, second left, and girlfriend Sylvia Mann, from The Royal Courts of Justice in London, Monday, Feb. 5, 2018. The ruling in Lauri Love's appeal against extradition to the United States, where he faced solitary confinement and a potential 99 year prison sentence, was ruled in his favour on Monday Feb. 5 at the Royal Courts of Justice. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)

He has been charged in three U.S. states: New Jersey, New York and Virginia.

At a hearing in November, his legal team said there was a high risk Love would kill himself, if he were extradited.

In their ruling, the High Court judges raised the possibility that Love could be prosecuted on home turf. Imprisonment and a trial in England wouldn't be "oppressive" and would pose much less of a suicide risk because he would be close to loved ones.

The judges said the Crown Prosecution Service "must now bend its

endeavors to his prosecution, with the assistance to be expected from the authorities in the United States, recognizing the gravity of the allegations in this case, and the harm done to the victims."



Lauri Love, who is accused of hacking into U.S. government computers, poses for the media outside The Royal Courts of Justice in London, Monday, Feb. 5, 2018. The ruling in Lauri Love's appeal against extradition to the United States, where he faces solitary confinement and a potential 99 year prison sentence, will be handed down on Monday Feb. 5 at the Royal Courts of Justice. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)

Prosecutors haven't indicated whether charges will be brought against Love in Britain.

Rebecca Niblock, an extradition expert at London law firm Kingsley

Napley, said the High Court judgment sets a valuable precedent for future cases.

"It is right for British courts to deal with individuals who are alleged to have committed crimes whilst in the U.K.," she said.



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