

A NEW York judge has ordered Matthew Lodge to pay the victims of his Manhattan rampage \$US1.234 million in damages.

US District Court Judge Kimba Wood's ruling against Lodge, in which he detailed the terror Lodge inflicted on German tourist Carolin Dekeyser, Manhattan couple Joseph Cartright and Ruth Fowler and their nine-year-old son, comes as the prop attempts to resurrect his NRL career.

The New York law firm representing the victims vowed to recoup every cent of the judge's order despite Lodge living in Australia.

"We are looking at any and every method available to us to collect on this judgment including potentially garnishing his future wages," Renan Varghese, a senior associate at Wigdor LLP, told AAP on Thursday.



Foyer Area CCTV photo shows former NRL player Matthew Lodge assaulting Joseph Cartright after being let into an apartment building in New York City. Picture: Supplied



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Lodge was arrested at gunpoint by NYPD officers in the early hours of October 16, 2015.

He was temporarily held in New York's infamous Rikers' Island jail complex until he was bailed out and his then NRL club, Wests Tigers, sacked him. Lodge, 21, has been working to return to the NRL, playing with Queensland's second tier club Redcliffe Dolphins and this week receiving approval to train with the NRL's Brisbane Broncos.

Lodge ignored the civil lawsuit, declining to testify at a hearing or hire a lawyer to mount a defence.

Ms Dekeyser, Mr Cartright and Ms Fowler provided harrowing testimony of the impact the 193cm tall Lodge has had on their lives.

The incident began at about 4am when Ms Dekeyser and a female friend were getting out of a taxi on Manhattan's Upper-West Side, Lodge followed them to an apartment building and yelled "he wanted to take them to Australia". Lodge also violently grabbed Ms Dekeyser by the shoulders "so that she could not escape".

"Lodge followed and threatened Dekeyser, stating 'Do you think you're going to die? This is the night you're going to die'," Judge Kimba wrote in his ruling. Mr Cartright, a resident of the building



Matthew Lodge of Redcliffe in action against Townsville during the Intrust Super Cup. Pic Darren England.

for more than 20 years, heard the women frantically ringing the intercom, went to the front door and “Lodge grabbed Cartright and made death threats”.

Lodge forced his way into Mr Cartright’s apartment where Ms Fowler and their nine-year-old were sleeping and shouted, “My name is Matthew Lodge. I come in peace. Salaam Alaikum” and smashed furniture, plates and other items.



Picture from the Instagram account of former Wests Tigers NRL player Matthew Lodge.

Judge Wood wrote “Lodge put Cartright in a headlock, punched him several times in the head, and shoved him” and “approached the bathroom in which Fowler and her son were, attempted to gain entry, and punched the door, leaving a hole”.

The family was so terrified by the incident they had to move out of the apartment and their son, who during the incident told his mum “I’m too young to die”, suffered from night terrors and had to see a child therapist. Ms Dekeyser told the court she is “haunted by the fear” that Lodge might seek her out and “suffers from trouble sleeping, night terrors, nervousness, and anxiety” whenever she is in the dark.

Judge Wood’s order includes \$US525,000 to Mr Cartright, \$US400,000 to Ms Fowler and \$US250,000 to Ms Dekeyser for emotional distress and punitive damages.



In a statement issued after the judgement was handed down Varghese said “We are extremely pleased that the Court has recognised the substantial harm that the Defendant, Matthew Lodge, caused our clients through his violent and reckless conduct. Mr. Lodge’s behaviour has caused our clients lasting damage but this is the first step in allowing them to recover and gain some measure of justice

“Our clients are happy with the outcome but no amount of money is going to compensate them for what happened or could make up for what they

experienced," Mr Varghese said.

"They would gladly give up all of the money to take these events back." The trio was upset in December when the judge in Lodge's New York criminal case opted against sentencing him to jail.

After Lodge completed community service and received alcohol abuse and anger treatment Judge Kate Paek sentenced him to a conditional discharge.

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