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October 18, 2024

**8 REPUTED GANG MEMBERS/ASSOCIATES INDICTED FOR MASSIVE FRAUD
SCHEME; TRIED TO CASH \$12.6 MILLION COVID RELIEF CHECK**
**Defendants Allegedly Spent Money on Rolls Royces, Chartered Luxury Yachts,
Jewelry and Designer Clothes**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that eight alleged members or associates of the “Shiesty 66” gang have been indicted for a bank fraud scheme that allegedly netted them over \$10 million, after an investigation by the Office’s Investigations Division, New York City Police Department, U.S. Secret Service, and U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

District Attorney Clark said, “The defendants allegedly conspired to steal millions of dollars, recruiting vulnerable people as partners in fraud. At one point, they allegedly attempted to steal \$12.6 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds. The defendants allegedly spent the money as quickly as they stole it, on luxury items.”

NYPD Interim Commissioner Thomas G. Donlon said, “We are committed to identifying and investigating alleged gang members and ending the illegal schemes used to fund their criminal activities, as highlighted by this indictment. The NYPD will always vigorously collaborate with our law enforcement partners to hold accountable those involved in deceit and fraud.”

Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service New York Field Office Patrick J. Freaney said, “The Secret Service is proud to join with its law enforcement partners in announcing the indictment of these reputed gang members who, as alleged, thought nothing of planning exorbitant acts of fraud to fleece taxpayers in the name of personal gain. Our investigators are committed to disrupting this type of wanton criminality, particularly when the fraud seeks to exploit funding dedicated to those in dire need.”

Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service New York Division, Daniel B. Brubaker, said, “The defendants, members of the “Shiesty 66” gang, allegedly conspired to steal checks from the mail worth millions of dollars. These stolen funds were allegedly used to support



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the defendants' lavish lifestyles. This far-reaching investigation by Postal Inspectors and our law enforcement partners involved victims from across the country. Postal Inspectors work aggressively to pursue mail thieves and protect our customers from falling victim to fraudulent schemes. Today's indictments are a shining example of our partnership with the NYPD, the U.S. Secret Service, and the Bronx District Attorney's Office. The message to other would-be mail thieves is this: we will utilize every resource at our disposal, travel across the country to identify victims, and leverage every partnership to bring you to justice."

District Attorney Clark said the defendants are variously charged over four indictments with Enterprise Corruption, Grand Larceny, Forgery, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property, and related charges. The defendants all have been arraigned, before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Margaret Clancy who set bail on six defendants and remanded two defendants. They are due back in court on November 19, 2024.

The investigation began in November 2021 after reports of shots fired near East 166th Street and Sheridan Avenue led to the identification of alleged members of the Shiesty 66 gang. Public profiles of the gang on social media revealed some of its members were allegedly involved in "card cracking" in which they recruited people on social media to give them access to their debit card information, deposited a phony check in the account, immediately withdrew cash at an ATM, gave the account holder a kickback and then the card was reported stolen.

According to the investigation, between April 28, 2022, and September 11, 2023, the defendants, acting in concert with each other, engaged in a card-cracking, check-washing, and bank fraud scheme. They allegedly exploited loopholes in the banking system to commit fraud throughout the tri-state area and the West Coast.

In one instance, one of the defendants attempted to get the information needed to deposit a stolen U.S. Treasury check worth \$12.6 million meant for Mount Sinai Medical Center as part of Covid relief funds.

The defendants allegedly used the stolen money to buy clothes from Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Cartier, and Burberry, as well as Rolex and Audemars Piguet watches, and lavish trips where they chartered boats in Paris, Miami, Kuwait, and other destinations.

The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jaclyn Wood, Supervisor in the Violent Criminal Enterprise Bureau, and Assistant District Attorney Pia Freedman of the



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Financial Frauds Bureau, under the supervision of Newton Mendys, Chief of the Violent Enterprise Bureau, Herman Wun, Chief of the Financial Frauds Bureau, and Craig Cecchini, Chief of the Special Investigations Bureau, under the overall supervision of Denise Kodjo, Deputy Chief of Investigations Division and Wanda Perez-Maldonado, Chief of Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Mary Jo Blanchard, Counsel to the Investigations Division, Trial Preparation Assistants Debra Abreu of the Financial Frauds Bureau and Alexandra Tomkin of the Investigations Division, Intelligence Analyst Jonathan Mulhern of the Crime Strategies Bureau, Principal Accountant Investigator Jim Antonino, and the Bronx District Attorney's Office Digital Forensic Laboratory for their assistance in the case.

District Attorney Clark thanked NYPD Detective Ryan Blair of the Violent Crime Squad, NYPD Intelligence Research Specialist Britney Ford, NYPD Detective Daniel Alessandrino of the Financial Crimes Task Force, Special Frauds Squad; U.S. Secret Service Agent Christine Miller, and U.S. Postal Service Inspector Tad Conklin for their work on the investigation.

Indictment 1

IND-74483-24

Souleman Traore, AKA Solo, 24, New Rochelle
Lahaji Traore, AKA Soufi, 24, Washington Avenue Bronx
Amadou Balde, 24, Franklin Avenue Bronx

Indictment 2

IND-74473-24

Moussa Cisse, 23, Hoe Avenue Bronx
Abubacarr Daffeh, AKA AB, 25, Briggs Avenue Bronx
Seth Young, AKA Lemonhead, 25, Alcott Place Bronx

Indictment 3

IND-74471-24

Keon Gulley, 31, Carroll Place Bronx

Indictment 4

IND-74474-24

Sekou Kaloka, 29, Union Avenue Bronx



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An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.