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District Attorney Michael E. McMahon & NYPD Announce Arrest and Indictment of Several Staten Island Gang Members Accused of Orchestrating Widespread Check Washing, Criminal Conspiracy

11 Defendants Face a Total of 60 Counts After Long-Term Investigation Uncovered a Vast Check Washing Scheme & Financial Criminal Conspiracy Which Sought to Bilk Over Half a Million Dollars from Over a Dozen Financial Institutions; On Wednesday, Nine Defendants Were Taken into Custody by the NYPD

On Wednesday, Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon and the New York City Police Department Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch announced the indictment and arrest of several individuals charged with operating a complex and multi-faceted financial criminal conspiracy on Staten Island. The result of a long-term investigation spearheaded by the Richmond County District Attorney's Office (RCDA) and the Staten Island Narcotics Major Case Team, the defendants are accused of stealing dozens of legitimate checks through the mail and dark web, altering the addressees of said checks, and fraudulently depositing and withdrawing large sums of cash.

Primarily using mobile deposits and online banking applications, the defendants were able to withdraw the stolen funds before the respective financial institutions could recognize the fraud and cancel the transaction. In total, the defendants victimized over a dozen businesses and organizations, and defrauded nearly 10 separate banks and financial institutions, totaling nearly $600,000. Purported members of New Brighton's 400/OS gang, the defendants successfully stole over $275,000 over the course of a 10-month period starting in December 2023. In addition to financing their criminal activity, the defendants spent the pilfered funds on lavish dinners, expensive clothing, and electronics.

"Stealing countless checks to manipulate and take advantage of nearly a dozen financial institutions, these defendants brazenly defrauded hundreds of thousands of dollars to finance one of the most violent crime outfits on Staten Island," **said District Attorney Michael E. McMahon.** "This investigation and today's announcement send a clear message that no quarter will be given to gang members here on Staten Island. Thanks to the men and women of the NYPD's Narcotics Bureau Staten Island, and my office's Narcotics-Investigations Bureau led by Bureau Chief Michele Molfetta, ADA Alexandria Paterno, and ADA Matthew Signorile, these dangerous defendants will now face the consequences for their widespread criminal actions."

"Over the course of ten months, the 11 defendants allegedly carried out an organized fraud scheme, stealing and altering checks to divert funds that bankrolled their criminal enterprise and extravagant lifestyles," said **NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch**. "This case is a powerful reminder that criminals will look to exploit weaknesses wherever they find them, including in our financial and postal systems. I would like to thank our NYPD investigators and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office for their partnership in holding these individuals accountable."

The investigation, commenced by the Staten Island Narcotics Major Case Team and RCDA in April 2024, focused on recent violence, rampant mail theft of checks, and the solicitation of said checks from known gang members to fellow co-conspirators in the New Brighton neighborhood of Staten Island. On Wednesday, nine defendants, including multiple violent predicate felons, were apprehended and arraigned for their involvement in the widespread criminal conspiracy.

"My office and the men and women of the NYPD will not stand idly by as violent gang members swindle our financial institutions to finance their pervasive criminal enterprise. The multitude of offenses detailed in these indictments are not victimless crimes – they shine a light on how violent criminals are exploiting our banking system to bankroll their destructive criminality, and frankly, our financial institutions need to reevaluate their practices and procedures to prevent these crimes in the first place," **added District Attorney McMahon**. "Additionally, far too many financial crimes in New York State, including the offenses outlined in these indictments, are bail ineligible, and I strongly urge our partners in the state legislature

to reconsider the disastrous consequences these offenses have on our communities and broader financial system."

The full list of defendants and charges filed against them can be found in the accompanying Indictments.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty

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