

PRESS RELEASE

Ten Members and Associates of the Gambino Crime Family Arrested in Coordinated U.S.-Italian Takedown

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of New York

Defendants Charged in Brooklyn Federal Court with Racketeering Conspiracy Involving Violent Extortions, Assaults, Arson, and Union-Related Crimes

A 16-count indictment was unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging 10 defendants with racketeering conspiracy, extortion, witness retaliation, and union-related crimes committed in an attempt to dominate the New York carting and demolition industries. All ten defendants are in custody and are scheduled to be arraigned this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Ramon E. Reyes, Jr. In connection with the arrests, federal authorities executed search warrants, one of which resulted in the seizure of multiple firearms from an associate of the Gambino crime Family.

In a coordinated operation, Italian law enforcement today arrested six organized crime members and associates who are charged with, among other crimes, mafia association and connected criminal offenses. One individual remains at large.

The defendants are Joseph Lanni, also known as "Joe Brooklyn" and "Mommino," an alleged captain in the Gambino organized crime family, Diego "Danny" Tantillo, Angelo Gradilone, also known as "Fifi," and James LaForte, alleged Gambino soldiers, Vito Rappa, alleged U.S.-based Sicilian Mafia member and Gambino associate, Francesco Vicari, also known as "Uncle Ciccio," alleged U.S.-based Sicilian Mafia associate and Gambino associate, and Salvatore DiLorenzo, Robert Brooke, Kyle Johnson, also known as "Twin," and Vincent Minsquero, also known as "Vinny Slick," alleged Gambino associates.

Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, James Smith, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent-in-Charge, Northeast Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG), Edward A. Caban, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD), and Elizabeth Crotty, Commissioner and Chair, New York City Business Integrity Commission (BIC), announced the charges.

"As alleged, for years, the defendants committed violent extortions, assaults, arson, witness retaliation and other crimes in an attempt to dominate the New York carting and demolition industries," stated United States Attorney Breon Peace. "Today's arrests reflect the commitment of this Office and our law enforcement partners, both here and abroad, to keep our communities safe by the complete dismantling of organized crime."

Mr. Peace expressed his appreciation to the New York Waterfront Commission, the Office's law enforcement partners in Italy, including the Prosecutor of Palermo, the *Polizia di Stato*, the *Servizio Centrale Operativo*, and the *Squadra Mobile* of Palermo.

"These defendants learned the hard way that the FBI is united with our law enforcement locally and internationally in our efforts to eradicate the insidious organized crime threat. Those arrested are alleged to have taken part in a racketeering conspiracy in an attempt to control the carting and demolition industries in the city. The FBI will continue to lead the fight against organized crime and ensure that individuals willing to cross the line face punishment in the criminal justice system" stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Smith.

"Today's arrests should serve as a warning to others who believe they can operate in plain sight with apparent impunity – the NYPD and our law enforcement partners exist to shatter that notion," stated NYPD Commissioner Edward A. Caban. "And we will continue to take down members of traditional organized crime wherever they may operate."

"An important part of the mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations of fraud involving labor unions and their affiliated employee benefit plans. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these types of allegations," said DOL-OIG Special Agent-in Charge Jonathan Mellone.

"Investigating these matters is at the heart of BIC's mission to ensure the industries under our regulation do not pose a risk to public safety. These arrests demonstrate that the influence of organized crime will never go unchecked," stated BIC Commissioner and

Chair Elizabeth Crotty. "BIC thanks the NYPD, FBI, EDNY, and our other agency partners for their collaboration and excellent work on this case."

As alleged in the government's court filings and summarized below, members and associates of the Gambino crime family used violent extortions, fraud, theft and embezzlement schemes to infiltrate the carting and demolition industries to enrich themselves and the Gambino crime family, including by laundering criminal proceeds. For example, in the midst of a financial dispute between Tantillo and the owners of Demolition Company 1, Tantillo and Johnson coordinated a violent hammer assault on the dispatcher for Demolition Company 1, which left the dispatcher bleeding and seriously injured.

Extortions Related to the Carting and Demolition Industries

Tantillo, Rappa, Vicari and Johnson engaged in a violent extortion conspiracy relating to the demand and receipt of money from John Doe 1, who operated a carting business in the New York City area. The extortion scheme involved threatening John Doe 1 with a bat, setting fire to the steps to John Doe 1's residence, attempting to damage John Doe 1's carting trucks, and violently assaulting an associate of John Doe 1. In addition, Tantillo and Vicari were captured on judicially-authorized wiretaps discussing threats they made to John Doe 1 and John Doe 1's father-in-law. On one call, Rappa stated that Vicari "acted like the 'Last of the Samurai,'" describing how Vicari picked up a knife and directed John Doe 1's father-in-law to threaten to cut John Doe 1 in half in order to get John Doe 1 to make extortionate payments. After John Doe 1 ultimately made a payment of \$4,000 to Vicari, Vicari and Rappa met and sent Tantillo a photo of Vicari raising a small champagne bottle, as in a toast.

In addition, Tantillo, Brooke and Johnson engaged in two separate violent extortion schemes of Demolition Company 1 and its owners over purported debts owed to Tantillo and a company operated by Tantillo and Brooke. Brooke violently assaulted one of the owners on a street corner in midtown Manhattan. In another instance, as mentioned, Tantillo and Johnson coordinated a violent hammer assault on a dispatcher at Demolition Company 1, which left the dispatcher bleeding and seriously injured. Pictures of the victim dispatcher were then circulated to various people in the carting and demolition industries.

Frauds and Union-Related Crimes in the Carting and Demolition Industries

The defendants also committed a series of crimes to steal and embezzle from unions and employee benefit plans and rigged bids in the demolition and carting industries. As part of one such scheme, DiLorenzo provided Rappa with a "no-show" job at

DiLorenzo's demolition company so that Rappa could receive paychecks and union health benefits, among other benefits. Similarly, Tantillo arranged for Gradilone to receive a "no-show" job at a construction company with which Tantillo was associated, which enabled Gradilone to receive paychecks and union health benefits to which he was not entitled. Tantillo and Johnson also conspired to secure a "no-show" job for Johnson, so that Johnson could similarly receive union health benefits.

Tantillo also embezzled from employee benefit plans by using laborers from a non-union company, Gane Services, Inc., to perform work for union companies operated by Tantillo, and failing to make contributions for such work as required by collective bargaining agreements.

In addition, Tantillo, DiLorenzo and their co-conspirators conspired to rig bids for lucrative demolition contracts in New York City. Among other things, Tantillo and DiLorenzo coordinated that their companies exchange bidding information to secure a project on Fifth Avenue.

Additional Charged Schemes

The defendants also perpetrated a series of other crimes throughout the New York and New Jersey areas from 2017 through 2023. Their pattern of racketeering activity included additional extortions, retaliating against a federal witness, and money laundering, among other crimes, as detailed in court documents. For example, in September 2023, Lanni and Minsquero coordinated an assault on proprietors of a restaurant in New Jersey, including physically assaulting a woman at knifepoint. In addition, LaForte, having previously been convicted of a felony, illegally possessed a firearm in or about May 2023.

The charges in the indictment are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The defendants variously face maximum sentences between 20 and 180 years' imprisonment.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's Organized Crime and Gangs Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Matthew R. Galeotti, Anna L. Karamigios, and Andrew M. Roddin are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Paralegal Specialist Emme Moosher.

The Defendants:

JOSEPH LANNI (also known as "Joe Brooklyn" and "Mommino")

Age: 52

Staten Island, New York

DIEGO TANTILLO (also known as "Danny" and "Daniel")

Age: 48

Freehold, New Jersey

ROBERT BROOKE

Age: 55

New York, New York

SALVATORE DILORENZO

Age: 66

Oceanside, New York

ANGELO GRADILONE (also known as "Fifi")

Age: 57

Staten Island, New York

KYLE JOHNSON (also known as "Twin")

Age: 46

Bronx, New York

JAMES LAFORTE (also known as "Jimmy")

Age: 46

New York, New York

VINCENT MINSQUERO (also known as "Vinny Slick")

Age: 36

Staten Island, New York

VITO RAPPA (also known as "Vi")

Age: 46

East Brunswick, New Jersey

FRANCESCO VICARI (also known as "Frank" and "Uncle Ciccio")

Age: 46

Elmont, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 23-CR-443

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