

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Founders of Boston Nonprofit Indicted on Fraud Charges

Defendants allegedly defrauded donors and grant issuers, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance and a mortgage lending business

BOSTON – The founders of a local nonprofit, Violence in Boston (VIB), have been indicted by a federal grand jury in connection with a series of alleged schemes designed to defraud VIB and its donors, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance and a mortgage lending business based in Chicago.

Monica Cannon-Grant, 41, and her husband Clark Grant, 38, both of Taunton, were charged in an 18-count indictment with two counts of wire fraud conspiracy; one count of conspiracy; 13 counts of wire fraud; and one count of making false statements to a mortgage lending business. The indictment also charges Cannon-Grant with one count of mail fraud.

Cannon-Grant was arrested this morning and will make her initial appearance in federal court in Boston later today. Grant was previously charged by criminal complaint in October 2021 with one count of wire fraud and one count of false statements on a loan and credit application. An arraignment date for Grant has not yet been scheduled by the Court.

Cannon-Grant is the founder and CEO of VIB, an anti-violence nonprofit formally established in 2017, the stated purpose of which is to reduce violence, raise social awareness and aid community causes in Boston, among other purposes. Grant is Cannon-Grant's husband, a founding director of VIB, and until recently a full-time employee for a commuter services company since July 2018.

The indictment alleges that the defendants conspired to use VIB as a vehicle to solicit and receive charitable contributions from institutional and individual donors that they then used for a wide range of personal expenses and to enrich themselves while concealing such expenditures from VIB directors, officers and others. Specifically, from 2017 through at least 2020, it is alleged that Cannon-Grant and Grant exercised exclusive control over VIB financial accounts and diverted VIB money to themselves through cash withdrawals, cashed checks, debit purchases and transfers to their personal bank accounts.

On numerous occasions between 2017 through 2021, Cannon-Grant allegedly applied for public and private funded grants and donations in which she represented the funds were to be used for VIB charitable purposes. However, it is alleged that Cannon-Grant and Grant used grant and donation money to pay for personal expenses including, among other things, hotel reservations; groceries; gas; car rentals; auto repairs; Uber rides; restaurants; food deliveries; nail salons; and personal travel. The defendants did not disclose to other VIB directors or VIB's bookkeepers or financial auditors that they had used VIB funds for such payments.

The defendants also allegedly conspired to defraud the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) by collecting Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits while at the same time collecting income from a variety of sources, including VIB funds utilized for Cannon-Grant and Grant's personal expenses, consulting fees paid to Cannon-Grant, compensation paid directly by VIB to Cannon-Grant, and the annual salary paid to Grant by his employer for his full-

time job. According to the indictment, beginning in or about May 2020 through 2021, Grant and Cannon-Grant fraudulently applied for PUA benefits, created by Congress in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, that they knew they were not eligible to receive. The defendants allegedly coordinated the submission of false online applications and certifications for PUA funds, concealed their income, used the fraudulently obtained PUA funds to pay for their joint household expenses and other personal expenditures, and created and submitted phony documentation in order to continue receiving weekly PUA COVID-19 benefits.

Additionally, the defendants allegedly conspired to defraud an Illinois-based mortgage lender when applying for a home mortgage loan in July 2021. Specifically, it is alleged that from in or about May 2021 through July 2021, Grant and Cannon-Grant submitted to the mortgage lender false information and fraudulent documentation that represented VIB assets as personal assets and concealed the fraudulent nature of Grant's PUA income, as well as the fraudulent nature of gift funds Grant received in order to help pay for mortgage fees and closing costs.

If you have information pertaining to the crimes alleged against the defendants, you may contact the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts at: (617) 748-3663.

The charges of wire fraud conspiracy each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense. The charge of conspiracy provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charges of wire fraud each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense. The charge of making false statements to a mortgage lending business provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison, up to five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

First Assistant United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Massachusetts Inspector General Glenn A. Cunha; Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigation; Joleen D. Simpson, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations in Boston; and Christina Scaringi, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region, made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Dustin Chao and Adam Deitch of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Topic(s):
Financial Fraud

Component(s):
[USAO - Massachusetts](#)