

PRESS RELEASE

Twelve Lakeland-Based Gang Members Charged With Paycheck Protection Program Fraud

Friday, September 5, 2025

For Immediate Release
U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District of Florida

Tampa, Florida – United States Attorney Gregory W. Kehoe announces the unsealing of 9 indictments charging 12 individuals with wire fraud. If convicted, each faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison. The following individuals have been charged:

Name	Age	City of Residence
Jamilah T’Asia Johnson	25	Winter Haven
Khalid Preston	29	Lakeland
Nickolas Lavonsoa Brantley	25	Lakeland
Alexis Lafaye Flournoy	34	Lakeland
Quinton Lakeith Owens	35	Lakeland
Tinika Sykes	35	Lakeland
Richard James Grimes, Jr.	39	Lakeland
Kenny White	31	Lakeland

Anthony Grant	31	Lakeland
Jacquez Howard	27	Lakeland
Treasure Johnson	28	Lakeland
Leter'e Webster	24	Lakeland

According to the indictments, these individuals are members or associates of the Lakeland-based Hood Boys gang. They devised a scheme to defraud the U.S. Small Business Administration by submitting false and fraudulent Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan applications. These programs were some of the sources of economic relief provided for by the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. While each claimed to operate a business, that statement in each PPP loan application was false.

Each of the defendants received between \$13,854 and \$20,416. Instead of repaying the loans, they either applied for the loans to be forgiven (which they were) or defaulted on them. The defendants spent the money on automobile payments and purchases at liquor stores, clothing stores, and gun stores. The total loss to the United States from these applications is approximately \$236,000.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed one or more violations of federal criminal law, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Department of Labor - Office of Inspector General. It will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Michael J. Buchanan and Jeff Chang.

This case was part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at www.justice.gov/OCDETF.

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 www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form.

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