

Gambino Crime Family Soldier Pleads Guilty to Racketeering Conspiracy and Related Charges

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Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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

James Laforte is the Last of 10 Defendants Indicted for Various Offenses Committed by Members and Associates of the Gambino Organized Crime Family

Earlier today, in federal court in Brooklyn, James Laforte, also known as “Jimmy,” an inducted member of the Gambino organized crime family, pleaded guilty before United States Magistrate Judge Joseph A. Marutollo to racketeering conspiracy, Hobbs Act extortion and Hobbs Act extortion conspiracy, witness retaliation, and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

LaForte is the last of 10 defendants charged in a 2023 indictment in connection with various offenses committed by members and associates of the Gambino crime family—including extortion, money laundering conspiracy and witness retaliation—to plead guilty or be convicted at trial. On October 17, 2025, seven members and associates of the Gambino crime family pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy in proceedings held before United States District Judge Frederic Block. Those defendants are Gambino crime family captain Joseph Lanni, also known as “Joe Brooklyn” and “Mommino;” Gambino soldiers Diego “Danny” Tantillo and Angelo Gradilone, also known as “Fifi;” U.S.-based Sicilian Mafia member and Gambino associate Vito Rappa, also known as “Vi;” U.S.-based Sicilian

Mafia associate and Gambino associate Francesco Vicari, also known as “Frank” and “Uncle Ciccio;” and Gambino associates Kyle Johnson, also known as “Twin,” and Vincent Minsquero, also known as “Vinny Slick.” In August 2025, Salvatore DiLorenzo pleaded guilty to theft from employee benefits plans. In December 2025, a federal jury convicted defendant Robert Brooke of one count of Hobbs Act extortion.

Joseph Nocella, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, James C. Barnacle, Jr., Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), Anthony P. D’Esposito, Inspector General of the United States Department of Labor (DOL-OIG), and Jessica S. Tisch, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD) announced the guilty pleas and trial conviction.

“The prosecution of these members and associates of the Gambino organized crime family has dealt a significant blow to that violent criminal enterprise,” stated United States Attorney Nocella. “Their efforts to take over and infiltrate legitimate businesses by means of intimidation threatened hardworking New Yorkers and terrorized their victims. Our Office will continue to hold accountable those who seek to use violence and fear to enrich themselves.”

Mr. Nocella expressed his appreciation to the New York City Business Integrity Commission, the New York Waterfront Commission, and 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 ten Gambino members and associates orchestrated a campaign of violent assaults and property destruction to collect debts and intimidate those employed by competing companies,” stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Barnacle. “Their collective actions terrorized New York residents and businesses to generate an illegal revenue stream. The FBI maintains its commitment to coordinating with our local and international law enforcement partners in the fight against organized crime.”

“These defendants used fraud, intimidation, and violence in an attempt to seize control of New York City’s demolition industry, including schemes targeting labor unions and their employee benefit plans,” stated DOL Inspector General D’Esposito. “DOL-OIG will continue working shoulder to shoulder with our law-enforcement partners to root out labor racketeering and eliminate the influence of organized crime from the labor industry. Accountability is non-negotiable.”

As set forth in court filings, members and associates of the Gambino crime family used violent extortion, 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, during a financial dispute between Tantillo and the owners of a demolition company (Demolition Company 1), Tantillo and Johnson coordinated a violent hammer assault on an employee of Demolition Company 1, which left the employee 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 an individual (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. 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.

As proven at Brooke's trial, in the fall of 2019, Brooke engaged in a violent extortion scheme against the owners of a demolition company (John Does 2 through 4) over purported debts owed to Tantillo and a company that was co-operated by Tantillo and Brooke. On December 18, 2019, one of the victims was walking to work when he was ambushed and attacked by Brooke at 50th Street and Eighth Avenue in midtown Manhattan. The victim suffered a fractured cheek bone, black eye and contusions to his face. In the weeks after the beating, Tantillo reached out to the victims who are brothers and told them to pay Brooke and to drop the criminal charges against Brooke. Fearing for the safety of themselves and their employees, the owners of the demolition company paid \$50,000 to Tantillo and \$40,000 to the company co-operated by Tantillo and Brooke.

Extortion and Assault of a Borrower

In 2020 and 2021, LaForte extorted a person who owed money to an associate of LaForte (John Doe 5). After failing to pay LaForte's associate on time, John Doe 5 was introduced to LaForte, who asked John Doe 5 to run an illegal poker game and a craps game for LaForte. When John Doe 5 asked LaForte after the craps game for John Doe 5's share of the earnings from running the game, LaForte hit John Doe 5 in the face, knocking John Doe 5 backward and giving him a black eye. LaForte later contacted John Doe 5's father to force John Doe 5 to pay what LaForte said was John Doe 5's debt. In text messages exchanged in November 2020, shortly after John Doe 5's loan, the person who had lent John Doe 5 the money wrote that "[t]his other punk [John Doe 5] is playing games," and "Might ride up to his house Saturday with one of my guys from down here." Another party to the conversation responded, "I took him up to c jimmy made it clear" and later added, "We'll get it. He's scared to death of jimmy."

Witness Retaliation and Assault

On February 17, 2021, LaForte and Minsquero assaulted a person who they believed had previously provided information to law enforcement about members and associates of organized crime (John Doe 6), while Lanni sat nearby. That evening LaForte and Minsquero approached John Doe 6 inside a restaurant. LaForte called John Doe 6 a “rat” and hit John Doe 6 in the face with a bottle. LaForte and Minsquero also flipped John Doe 6’s table, sending drinks and shattered glass everywhere.

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

Various 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.

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The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Organized Crime and Gangs Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Anna L. Karamigios, Andrew M. Roddin, Elias Laris, and Brooke E. Theodora are in charge of the prosecution.

Defendant Who Pleaded Guilty Today:

JAMES LAFORTE (also known as “Jimmy”)

Age: 49

New York, New York

Defendants Who Previously Pleaded Guilty:

JOSEPH LANNI (also known as “Joe Brooklyn” and “Mommino”)

Age: 54

Staten Island, New York

DIEGO TANTILLO (also known as “Danny” and “Daniel”)

Age: 50

Freehold, New Jersey

ROBERT BROOKE

Age: 58

New York, New York

SALVATORE DILORENZO

Age: 69

Oceanside, New York

ANGELO GRADILONE (also known as “Fifi”)

Age: 59

Staten Island, New York

KYLE JOHNSON (also known as “Twin”)

Age: 48

Bronx, New York

VINCENT MINSQUERO (also known as “Vinny Slick”)

Age: 39

Staten Island, New York

VITO RAPPA (also known as “Vi”)

Age: 58

East Brunswick, New Jersey

FRANCESCO VICARI (also known as “Frank” and “Uncle Ciccio”)

Age: 65

Elmont, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 23-CR-443 (FB)

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