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**California Man Indicted for Stealing Identity of Army Veteran,
Applying for Benefits, Including More Than \$35,000 in Housing Subsidies**

*Defendant and Girlfriend Variously Charged in 84-Count Indictment;
Victim of the Alleged Scheme is the Ex-Husband of the Female Defendant*

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, together with Special Agent in Charge Christopher Algieri of the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General's Northeast Field Office and Acting New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Daniel G. Cort, today announced that a California couple has been arraigned on an indictment in which they are variously charged with grand larceny, identity theft, welfare fraud and other charges for allegedly using the identity of a U.S. Army veteran to apply for government benefits, including through the Veterans Administration, for Section 8 housing in Brooklyn.

District Attorney Gonzalez said, "These defendants are charged with brazenly stealing the identity of an Army veteran to fraudulently obtain benefits to which they were not entitled. Furthermore, they allegedly harmed his reputation by again using his name when one was arrested for an alleged domestic violence incident. Thanks to the hard work of our prosecutors and our law enforcement partners we will now seek to hold them accountable."

Special Agent in Charge Algieri said, "VA OIG is committed to holding accountable those who perpetrate fraud against VA and its programs. We would like to thank our law enforcement partners for their hard work and dedication in this collaborative effort."

Acting DOI Commissioner Cort said, "Over nearly two years, these defendants not only stole public housing and benefit funds but steadily and repeatedly exploited the honor and integrity of the victim in this case, an Army veteran, according to the charges. The crimes charged in this indictment -- identity theft, criminal impersonation, grand larceny and welfare fraud, among others -- alter victims' official data, undermining their livelihoods and creating avoidable legal and financial obstacles. DOI is proud to have partnered with the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office and the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on this important corruption investigation."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Kevin Middleton, 40, and Tonni Chapman, 49, both of Los Angeles, California (formerly of Brooklyn). They were arraigned today before Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun on an 84-count indictment in which they are variously charged with third- and fourth-degree grand larceny, second-degree forgery, first- and second-degree identity theft, second-degree criminal impersonation, third- and fourth-degree welfare fraud, and related charges. They were released without bail and ordered to return to court on March 23, 2022.

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, in February 2018, Kevin Middleton allegedly posed as Kevin Chapman and obtained a non-driver's license identification card from the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles in Kevin Chapman's name. The I.D. card was issued in Chapman's name and with his date of birth, but with Middleton's photograph.

It is also alleged that Middleton obtained a replacement Social Security card in Chapman's name under his Social Security number, and that the defendant forged Chapman's signature onto the card. The defendant also allegedly obtained a New York State identification card in Chapman's name, but with the defendant's photograph.

Furthermore, it is alleged, the defendant posed as Kevin Chapman in May 2018 and went to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs office in Manhattan and applied for a replacement VA card in Kevin Chapman's name. He allegedly used the fraudulently obtained non-driver's license, NYS I.D. card and Social Security card as proof of identity. A replacement card was mailed to the defendant in Brooklyn, with his photo and Kevin Chapman's name and date of birth on it.

Kevin Chapman, the victim in this case, is a U.S. Army veteran and the former husband of defendant Tonni Chapman, who is the girlfriend of defendant Kevin Middleton.

It is alleged that the defendants applied for benefits pursuant to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) using Kevin Chapman's identity and received \$1,000 in benefits from May 31, 2018 and January 13, 2020.

It is alleged that the defendants, using Kevin Chapman's identity, received social services from the VA to which they were not entitled while living in a homeless shelter. In approximately September 2018, social workers from the VA assisted Middleton with his application for Section 8 housing, in Chapman's name, which the New York City Housing Authority expedited because of his status as a military veteran. From November 2018 through the present, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development paid more than \$35,000 to subsidize the defendant's rent at the Boulevard Houses in East New York.

Furthermore, it is alleged, on June 8, 2019, police went to the apartment in response to a 911 call involving a domestic dispute and were allegedly told by Tonni Chapman that her assailant (who was not home at the time) was Kevin Chapman. The next day, the police returned to the apartment and arrested Kevin Middleton, who was allegedly posing as Kevin Chapman. When he failed to appear in court in July 2019, a bench warrant was issued for Kevin Chapman.

The case was investigated by Senior Assistant District Attorney Joseph DiBenedetto of the Cyber Crimes Unit of the District Attorney's Frauds Bureau.

DOI Confidential Investigator Ardijana Ivezic assisted in the investigation, under the supervision of Assistant Inspector General Jeremy Reyes and Inspector General John Bellanie, and Chief Investigator Robert Joyce, Assistant Inspector General Briglantina Bujaj, and Deputy Inspector General J. Graham Forbes, under the supervision of Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, all under the direction of Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and Acting First Deputy Commissioner Philip Hung.

The case is being prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Joseph DiBenedetto of the Cyber Crimes Unit of the District Attorney's Frauds Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Gregory Pavlides, Chief of the Frauds Bureau, and the overall supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michel Spanakos, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Investigations Division and Assistant District Attorney Patricia McNeill, Chief of the Investigations Division.

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An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt