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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 17, 2023

Brooklyn Residents Indicted for Making and Selling Fake OSHA and Buildings Department Safety Cards

Allegedly Sold Dozens of Counterfeit Safety and Training Certifications to New York Construction Workers Who Never Received the Required Training

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, together with the New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber, today announced that a 42-year-old woman and the owners of two Brooklyn companies that allegedly provide jobsite safety training and certification have been arraigned on separate indictments charging them with making and selling dozens of fake safety cards to New York construction workers who never received the required training.

District Attorney Gonzalez said, “Evading regulations that ensure worksite safety training and certification is inexcusable and puts people’s lives at risk. Today’s indictments should send a strong message that when alleged fraudsters offer dangerous shortcuts, or attempt to profit by getting around safety requirements, they will face serious repercussions. I thank DOI for their continued cooperation in investigating corruption cases.”

Commissioner Strauber said, “As charged, these defendants made and sold illegitimate documents that purported to certify construction workers had the required training when in fact they did not. City and federal agencies’ construction safety rules are not optional, and promoting work-arounds to rigorous courses and programs designed to ensure worker safety can and does lead to dangerous and tragic results. I thank the NYCHA employee who prompted this investigation by reporting discrepancies regarding a contractor’s safety card to DOI. And I thank District Attorney Gonzalez and his team for their continued partnership on investigating these important cases that hold accountable anyone who undercuts construction safety in New York City.”

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Latecia Moore, 42, of Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn; Alex Kaushanskiy, 35, of Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn; and Benedetto Bonello, 35, of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. Moore is charged with ten counts of second-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument, two counts of second-degree forgery, and four counts of first-degree falsifying business records. Kaushanskiy and his company, Odessa Safety, Inc., are charged with three counts of second-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument and three counts of first-degree falsifying business records. Bonello and his company, National Site Safety LLC, are charged with two counts of second-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument. Defendants Kaushanskiy and Bonello are authorized OSHA trainers but, according to the investigation, did not provide the required trainings.

Bonello was arraigned today before Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun. He was released without bail and ordered to return to court on June 14, 2023. Moore and Kaushanskiy were arraigned on April 13, 2023 before Justice Chun. They were released without bail and ordered to return to court on June 13, 2023 and June 14, 2023, respectively.

The District Attorney said the investigation began in November 2021 after NYCHA reported to DOI that it had identified construction safety cards with discrepancies as part of a routine check.

Workers on construction projects requiring permits by the City's Department of Buildings (DOB) are required to take safety courses approved by the U.S. Occupation Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) and are required to carry a card reflecting that certification. OSHA provides for the issuance of a 10-hour training certification for entry-level workers and a 30-hour training certification for safety managers and coordinators.

Additionally, under Local Law 196 of 2017, New York City requires additional safety certifications for some construction workers, including the Site Safety Training certification (SST) for workers and supervisors. An SST card for workers can be earned by completing the OSHA 30-hour training program plus 10 additional hours of training. An SST card for supervisors can be earned by completing the OSHA 30-hour training program plus 32 additional hours of training that includes courses in fall prevention, scaffolding, drug and alcohol awareness, and site safety. The SST card contains a QR code, which, when scanned, displays a photograph of the holder, the SST ID number and other information regarding the training the cardholder has completed.

As part of the investigation, DOI executed a search warrant at Moore's workplace and recovered computers, a card printer, and various counterfeit OSHA and SST cards. It is alleged Moore manufactured fake cards which were later sold to customers for between \$200 and \$650 per card. DOI also made an undercover purchase of a fraudulent OSHA-30 card and another type of fraudulent card from Bonello at his company, National Site Safety. Furthermore, according to the investigation, DOI conducted undercover buys of phony OSHA and SST cards from Odessa Safety. The undercovers were instructed to complete paperwork such as course attendance sheets and evaluation forms without having to attend any actual classes.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by Deputy Inspector General Gregory Deboer, under the supervision of Inspector General for NYCHA Ralph M. Iannuzzi, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel G. Cort.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Adam Libove, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Bureau, and Senior Assistant District Attorney Tammy Chung, also of the PIB, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Laura Neubauer, Bureau Chief, 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 merely an accusation and not proof of a defendant's guilt.