



Eric Gonzalez
District Attorney

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KINGS COUNTY

350 Jay Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 250-2000
www.BROOKLYNDA.ORG

Press Office
(718) 250-2300

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

Couple Sentenced for Stealing Identity of Army Veteran, Applying for Benefits and Bail Jumping; Ordered to Pay \$35,000 Restitution

*Defendants Sentenced to Five Months in Jail,
Victim of the Scheme is the Ex-Husband of the Female Defendant*

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez and New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber today announced that a man and woman have been sentenced to five months in jail and five years' probation for 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, "Today's sentence holds the defendants accountable for stealing the identity of a U.S. Army veteran and receiving benefits to which they were not entitled. Thanks to the hard work of my prosecutors and our law enforcement partners, we were able to restore this veteran's good name."

Commissioner Strauber said, "These defendants preyed upon a U.S. Army veteran, stealing his identification to fraudulently obtain government benefits that included more than \$35,000 in rent subsidies for their New York City Housing Authority apartment. Today's sentence shows that committing identity theft to steal public funds has serious consequences, and I thank the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office for prosecuting this case."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Kevin Middleton, 41, and Tonni Chapman, 50, formerly of Brooklyn. They were sentenced today by Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun to five months in jail and five years' probation. The judge also executed a Judgment Order of Restitution in the amount of \$34,399 for which the defendants are jointly liable. On March 15, 2023, Middleton pleaded guilty to first-degree identity theft and second-degree bail jumping and Chapman pleaded guilty to first-degree offering a false instrument for filing and second-degree bail jumping.

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, in February 2018, Kevin Middleton 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.

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

Furthermore, 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 used the fraudulently obtained non-driver's license, NYS I.D. card and Social

Security card as proof of identity. A replacement VA 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.

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

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 Kevin Chapman's name, which the New York City Housing Authority expedited because of his status as a military veteran. The application was granted and in November 2018 the couple moved into the apartment and 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, on June 8, 2019, police went to the apartment in response to a 911 call involving a domestic dispute and were 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 posing as Kevin Chapman. When he failed to appear in court in July 2019, a bench warrant was issued for Kevin Chapman.

In 2021, following an investigation, the defendants were indicted in connection with the impersonation of Kevin Chapman and they were arrested. After failing to appear in late 2022, the defendants were arrested in Honolulu, Hawaii on January 24, 2023 and charged with bail jumping. They were returned to Brooklyn on February 9, 2023.

The case was investigated by Senior Assistant District Attorney Joseph DiBenedetto of the District Attorney's Frauds Bureau and Detective Investigators from the District Attorney's office, who located and apprehended the defendants.

The District Attorney thanked the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General for their assistance with the case.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by Chief Investigator Robert Joyce, Assistant Inspector General Briglantina Bujaj and Deputy Inspectors General J. Graham Forbes and Jeremy Reyes, under the supervision of Senior Inspectors General John Bellanie and Ralph Iannuzzi, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel G. Cort.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Joseph DiBenedetto of the 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.