



U.S. Department of Justice

Breon Peace

United States Attorney

Eastern District of New York

*271 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2024

Contact:

John Marzulli

Danielle Blustein Hass

United States Attorney's Office

(718) 254-6323

PRESS RELEASE

**Defendants Received Over \$500,000 in Illegal Kickback Payments From Vendor
Selected to Install Security Cameras at Homeless Shelters**

Earlier today, in federal court in Brooklyn, an indictment was unsealed charging Gary DSilva, also known as "Pankaj DSilva," Jonathan Velazquez and Luis A. Camarena with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, bribery and money laundering, as well as substantive counts of wire fraud and federal-program bribery, for their roles in a yearslong kickback scheme. The defendants were arraigned this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Vera M. Scanlon.

Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation (DOI) and James E. Dennehy, Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), announced the charges.

"These defendants misappropriated public funds through a brazen kickback scheme," stated United States Attorney Peace. "When corrupt employees siphon public funds to line their own pockets, the neediest New Yorkers bear the brunt. My Office will relentlessly pursue those who try to compromise the integrity of our community organizations."

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "These employees of a City-funded nonprofit participated in an illegal kickback scheme, enriching themselves by stealing from their employer, an entity providing critical services to New Yorkers in need, as alleged in the indictment. Theft of precious public funds deprives deserving members of our community of resources and I am thankful to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and the FBI for their shared commitment to protect those funds for the benefit of their intended recipients."

"Gary DSilva and Jonathan Velazquez, two non-profit organization workers, allegedly received more than \$500,000 in illicit kickback payments from Luis Camarena, a contractor hired to install security services in some of the city's homeless shelters. This alleged quid pro quo agreement only enriched the involved parties and deprived the city of vital infrastructural

more

improvements. The FBI will never tolerate corrupt individuals who selfishly steal public funds intended to support our city’s vulnerable populations,” stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Dennehy.

As alleged in the indictment, DSilva and Velazquez were employed in the Management Information Systems department of a Brooklyn-based non-profit entity (the Organization) that supplied a number of services to indigent New Yorkers, including administering multiple homeless shelters. DSilva and Velazquez, as part of their work for the Organization, were responsible for soliciting vendors to complete various projects involving information technology. DSilva solicited bids from one such vendor (the Vendor) for multiple projects involving the installation or replacement of security cameras at the Organization’s homeless shelters. Camarena was the principal of the Vendor. The Vendor ultimately received approximately \$1.6 million in payments from the Organization for work related to these security-camera projects from approximately 2017 to 2021. During that same period, the Vendor paid a total of over \$500,000 in kickbacks to DSilva and Velazquez. These illegal payments took the form of payments to credit cards in the names of DSilva and Velazquez and their spouses and payments to shell companies registered to DSilva’s spouse. In one email obtained during the investigation, Camarena, DSilva, and Velazquez discussed how they would divide the “profit” from the business the Vendor received from the Organization among themselves.

The charges in the indictment are allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

In July 2022, Mr. Peace was selected as the Chairperson of the White Collar Fraud subcommittee for the Attorney General’s Advisory Committee (AGAC). As the leader of the subcommittee, Mr. Peace plays a key role in making recommendations to the AGAC to facilitate the prevention, investigation and prosecution of various financially motivated, non-violent crimes.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Laura Zuckerwise and Turner Buford are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Paralegal Specialist Kavya Kannan.

The Defendants:

Gary DSilva (also known as “Pankaj DSilva”)

Age: 46

Manalapan, New Jersey

Jonathan Velazquez

Age: 54

Massapequa Park, New York

Luis A. Camerena

Age: 57

Jackson Township, New Jersey

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-CR-471 (HG)