



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**PASTOR WITH CABLE TV RELIGIOUS SHOW CHARGED WITH  
\$2 MILLION INVESTMENT FRAUD IN PHONY JEWELRY BUSINESS**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and RONALD J. VERROCHIO, the Inspector-in-Charge of the New York Office of the United States Postal Inspection Service ("USPIS"), announced the arrest Monday of SAMUEL SOLANKY, a/k/a "Samee Solanky," on charges of fraudulently obtaining investments in a non-existent jewelry business.

According to the criminal Complaint filed in White Plains federal court and as stated by the Government at the presentment, which took place yesterday before United States Magistrate Judge LISA MARGARET SMITH:

Commencing in approximately June 2005, SOLANKY, a pastor who broadcasts a religious show on cable television known as "Vandana" and who operates a website at vandana.org., fraudulently induced investors, including some who knew of him from his religious activities, to invest more than \$2 million in a purported jewelry business. Certain investors were told that they would receive a 100 percent return on their investment within a matter of months. In fact, at least two checks SOLANKY issued to investors were written on an account with completely insufficient funds to pay the checks. Records of bank accounts under SOLANKY's control show that when money was received from an investor, that money would often be wire transferred to various foreign entities--none of which appear to be involved in the jewelry business--or withdrawn in cash.

SOLANKY, 61, is charged with one count of mail fraud, which carries, upon conviction, a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

Mr. DASSIN thanked the USPIS for its work in this investigation and said the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorney SARAH R. KRISOFF is in charge of the prosecution.

If you believe you were a victim of this crime, including a victim entitled to restitution, and you wish to provide information to law enforcement and/or receive notice of future developments in the case or additional information, please contact Wendy Olsen-Clancy, the Victim Witness Coordinator at the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York at (866) 874-8900 or [Wendy.Olsen@usdoj.gov](mailto:Wendy.Olsen@usdoj.gov). For additional information, go to: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nys/victimwitness.html> on the Internet.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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