USAO2025R00412/FL

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	:	Hon.
	:	
v.	:	Crim. No. 26-
	:	
	:	18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 506(a)(3), 666(a)(2),
MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ	:	701, 1343, 1346, and 1349

INFORMATION

The defendant having waived in open court prosecution by Indictment, the United States charges:

Count 1
(Conspiracy to Commit Honest Services Fraud)

Defendant and Other Individuals and Entities

1. At times relevant to this Information:

a. Defendant MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ ("DAVIDOVITZ") was a resident of Rockland County, New York, and was involved in acquiring and developing real estate in, among other places, Newark, New Jersey.

b. Co-Conspirator-1 ("CC-1") was formerly employed as a code enforcement officer with the City of Newark's Office of Inspection and Enforcement. CC-1 was reappointed as a City of Newark employee in or around 2025. CC-1 served as a liaison between DAVIDOVITZ and City of Newark employees, including Co-Conspirator-2 ("CC-2"), on matters relating to permitting and the issuance of certificates related to real estate development and construction, among other official matters.

c. CC-2 was an employee of the City of Newark who was responsible for, among other things, issuing certificates of occupancy ("COs"), which are described in more detail below.

d. The City of Newark government received benefits in excess of $10,000 in the relevant one-year period, within the meaning of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(d)(5), under Federal programs involving a grant, contract, subsidy, loan, guarantee, insurance and other forms of Federal assistance, to include funds from programs administered by the Community Planning and Development Division of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development whose purposes were, among other things, to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and by expanding economic opportunities.

The Offense

2. From in or about June 2024 through in or about November 2024, in the District of New Jersey, the Southern District of New York, and elsewhere, defendant

MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ

did knowingly and intentionally conspire and agree with Co-Conspirator-1, Co-Conspirator-2, and others to devise and execute a scheme and artifice to defraud the City of Newark, New Jersey of the right to the honest services of City of Newark employees, including Co-Conspirator-2, in the affairs of the City of Newark, and to transmit and cause to be transmitted by means of wire, radio, and television communication in interstate and foreign commerce, writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds for the purpose of executing such scheme and artifice, contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1343 and 1346.

Object of the Conspiracy

3. It was an object of the conspiracy for DAVIDOVITZ to employ CC-1 as a conduit for the payment of bribes to City of Newark agents, including CC-2, in exchange for the agents' official action in matters related to City of Newark properties owned by DAVIDOVITZ.

Manner and Means of the Conspiracy

4. It was part of the conspiracy that:

a. DAVIDOVITZ owned and/or managed multiple residential real estate properties in the City of Newark, including a property on Johnson Street (the "Johnson Street Property").

b. CC-1, in exchange for cash and other benefits, coordinated with City of Newark employees, including CC-2, to assist DAVIDOVITZ in, among other things, obtaining expedited official action to resolve certain issues encountered by DAVIDOVITZ in connection with his real estate holdings. For example, owners of Newark residential properties, such as DAVIDOVITZ, must obtain Certificates of Occupancy, or "COs," before the property can be occupied or sold. By issuing a CO, the City of Newark confirms that the property complies with local building codes and is suitable for occupancy. COs cannot be issued for properties with outstanding City of Newark violations.

c. On DAVIDOVITZ's behalf, CC-1 paid the City of Newark employees, including CC-2, approximately $13,000 in bribes in exchange for their assistance in, among other things, resolving violations at DAVIDOVITZ's properties and issuing expedited COs.

d. On occasion, DAVIDOVITZ and his co-conspirators took steps to conceal the corrupt nature of these financial transactions. For example, on certain occasions, CC-1 instructed DAVIDOVITZ to send the payments to at least two other individuals, via Zelle[1] and other electronic payment platforms.

e. DAVIDOVITZ and his co-conspirators used various interstate wire transmissions to further and facilitate their scheme, including but not limited to e-mails and text messages.

<u>Overt Acts</u>

5. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect its unlawful object, DAVIDOVITZ and his co-conspirators committed the following acts, among others, in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere:

a. On or about July 11, 2024, CC-1 used a cellular phone to send approximately three screenshots to DAVIDOVITZ's cellular phone. These screenshots reflected that an inspection for one of DAVIDOVITZ's properties had occurred and that "everything was abated." CC-1 also asked DAVIDOVITZ, via an electronic message, "Where am I requesting [the remaining money] from?"

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[1] Zelle is a United States-based digital payment network that allows customers to send money directly between almost any U.S. bank accounts, typically within minutes, with just an email address or U.S. mobile phone number.

b. In response to CC-1's question, as set forth in paragraph 7(a) of this Complaint, DAVIDOVITZ responded on or about the same day, via electronic message, "Will have office send."

c. From on or about August 28, 2024 through on or about September 27, 2024, DAVIDOVITZ used a mobile payment application Apple Pay[2] to send CC-1 and CC-1's associate payments for CC-1's role in the conspiracy, as set forth in the following chart:

Approximate Date of Transaction	**Recipient**	**Approximate Amount**
August 28, 2024	CC-1	$400
August 29, 2024	CC-1	$500
September 2, 2024	CC-1's Associate	$300
September 8, 2024	CC-1	$500
September 27, 2024	CC-1	$450

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349.

[2] Apple Pay is a mobile payment application that links a person's Apple devices to a person's credit or debit card so that they can make secure, contactless purchases and transfer money using an iPhone, Apple Watch, Mac, or iPad.

<u>Count 2</u>

<u>(Conspiracy to Commit Bribery)</u>

1. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1, 3, 4, and 5 of Count 1 of this Information are realleged here.

2. From in or about June 2024 through in or about November 2024, in the District of New Jersey, the Southern District of New York, and elsewhere, defendant

MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ

knowingly and intentionally did conspire and agree with Co-Conspirator-1 and others to corruptly give, offer, and agree to give a thing of value, namely, cash bribes, to agents of the City of Newark, New Jersey, including Co-Conspirator-2, intending to influence and reward such agents, in connection with a business, transaction, and series of transactions of the City of Newark involving a thing of value of $5,000 and more, contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(2).

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

Count 3
(Conspiracy to Sell False Seals)

Defendant and Other Individuals and Entities

1. The allegations contained in paragraph 1(a) of Count 1 of this Information are realleged here.

2. At times relevant to this Information:

a. Jonathan Ledesma ("Ledesma") was a resident of Carteret, New Jersey and was employed as a United States Air Marshal.[3] Ledesma was also a registered member/manager for an auto repair limited liability company (the "Ledesma Company").

b. Co-Conspirator-3 ("CC-3") was a New Jersey resident and a City of Newark police officer who was an associate of both DAVIDOVITZ and Ledesma.

c. Company-1 was a company in Nutley, New Jersey that sold, among other items, cards to law enforcement officers that the officers could provide to their friends and family (the "Identification Cards"). Individuals purchased the Identification Cards so if they were encountered by law enforcement they could falsely identify themselves as having a relationship with a member of federal law enforcement. These cards were embossed with the name of the law enforcement officer's agency, and related insignia, and included a "QR code"[4] that, when

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3 The Federal Air Marshal service is under the supervision of the Transportation Security Administration of United States Department of Homeland Security ("DHS").

4 A "QR," or "quick response" code is a two-dimensional matrix barcode which can be read by an imaging device, such as a cellular phone camera.

scanned, would provide the cellular phone number associated with the officer's telephone. The Identification Cards included a description of the relationship between the officer and the card's bearer, such as "family member." An example of the Identification Cards is included below, with the bearer's name redacted:

d. Neither DAVIDOVITZ, Ledesma, nor CC-3 were licensed or permitted to sell items that were embossed with the insignia of DHS.

The Offense

3. From in or about October 2021 through in or about January 2023, in the District of New Jersey, the Eastern District of New York, the Southern District of New York, and elsewhere, defendant

MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ

did knowingly and intentionally conspire and agree with others to execute a scheme and artifice to sell, with fraudulent intent, falsely made, forged, and counterfeited United States Department of Homeland Security insignia, contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Section 506(a)(3).

Object of the Conspiracy

4. It was an object of the conspiracy for DAVIDOVITZ, Ledesma, CC-3, and their co-conspirators to enrich themselves through the unlawful sale of the Identification Cards.

Manner and Means of the Conspiracy

5. From in or about October 2021 through in or about January 2023, Ledesma purchased over 200 Cards from Company-1. Each card cost Ledesma approximately $19.21.

6. Ledesma, DAVIDOVITZ, and CC-3 then resold these cards, at a substantial profit. Ledesma, DAVIDOVITZ, and CC-3 utilized mobile payment platforms to accept payment for the Identification Cards and to share profits between them.

7. The resale of these cards are not authorized by any regulations made pursuant to law.

Overt Acts

8. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect its unlawful object, DAVIDOVITZ and his co-conspirators committed the following acts, among others, in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere:

a. On or about July 12, 2021, DAVIDOVITZ exchanged electronic messages with a prospective purchaser of an Identification Card ("Individual-3") and Individual-3 asked, "Can I buy 2 badges?" In response, DAVIDOVITZ wrote, "Yes. I'll call u later for details."

b. On or about July 15, 2021, DAVIDOVITZ and Individual-3 exchanged additional electronic messages. During this communication, Individual-3 asked, "Hi for 5 pieces can I get a better price?" and DAVIDOVITZ responded, "np" [no problem].

c. On or about January 19, 2022, DAVIDOVITZ received the following electronic message from a prospective purchaser of an Identification Card ("Individual-4"): "Good morning. Am I able to provide a Homeland Security card[?]" DAVIDOVITZ responded, "Very hard to get now I will see what I can do."

d. Later that same day, DAVIDOVITZ sent the following electronic message to Individual-5: "I could get you one. It will be $1500 and I will need a picture of your license."

e. On or about July 4, 2022, DAVIDOVITZ exchanged electronic messages with a prospective purchaser of an Identification Card ("Individual-5"). Individual-5 provided his/her name and stated, "I would like to pick up my wife's badge please[.] What's your address?" DAVIDOVITZ responded by providing Individual-5 with his home address.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

Count 4

(Conspiracy to Sell Official Insignia)

1. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of Count 3 of this Information are realleged here.

2. From in or about October 2021 through in or about January 2023, in the District of New Jersey, the Eastern District of New York, the Southern District of New York, and elsewhere, defendant

MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ

did knowingly and intentionally conspire and agree with others to execute a scheme and artifice to sell insignia of the design prescribed by the head of a department or agency of the United States for use by any officer and employee thereof, and any colorable imitation thereof, namely, a United States Department of Homeland Security insignia, without authorization under regulations made pursuant to law, contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Section 701.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

FORFEITURE ALLEGATION

Upon conviction of the offenses charged in Counts 1 and 2 of this Information, defendant MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ ("DAVIDOVITZ") shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), any property, real or personal, which constitutes or was derived from proceeds traceable to the commission of such offense.

Substitute Assets Provision

If any of the above-described forfeitable property, as a result of any act or omission of the defendant:

a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;

b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party;

c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court;

d. has been substantially diminished in value; or

e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty,

it is the intent of the United States, pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), to seek forfeiture of any other property of the defendant up to the value of the above-described forfeitable property.

ROBERT FRAZER
United States Attorney

/s/ Francesca Liquori
Francesca Liquori
Assistant United States Attorney

Approved:

Ronnell L. Wilson
Ronnell L. Wilson
Chief, Special Prosecutions Division

CASE NUMBER: ____________

United States District Court
District of New Jersey

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

MENASHE DAVIDOVITZ

INFORMATION FOR

18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 506(a)(3), 701, 1343, 1346, and 1349

ROBERT FRAZER
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

FRANCESCA LIQUORI
ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY
(973) 297-4373