



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

**QUEENS MAN CHARGED WITH CREATING BOGUS COMPANIES
TO COLLECT MORE THAN \$1 MILLION IN PANDEMIC RELIEF**

*Spent Federal Money on Travel, High-End Shopping;
Faces Up to 25 Years in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Papa Diakhate was charged with grand larceny, accused of creating bogus companies to secure more than a \$1 million in federal pandemic relief funds intended to help businesses stay afloat and keep workers employed. Diakhate instead spent the relief dollars on leisure travel, shopping sprees at high-end retailers and a \$14,000 Rolex watch, among other lavish expenses.

District Attorney Katz said: “At the height of the pandemic, the health crisis was exacting a devastating human and economic toll around the world, especially here in New York. Amidst the misery, the unscrupulous saw opportunities to be exploited. We are charging that the defendant was one such individual, someone who shamelessly schemed to profit from the financial hardship wrought by Covid.”

Diakhate, 54, of Astoria Boulevard in East Elmhurst, was arraigned yesterday on a complaint charging him with one count of grand larceny in the first degree; one count of criminal possession of stolen property in the first degree; two counts of grand larceny in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree, and two counts of falsifying business records in the first degree. If convicted, Diakhate faces up to 25 years in prison. Queens Criminal Court Judge Maria Gonzalez ordered the defendant to return to court on November 27.

According to the charges:

- Diakhate submitted Federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan applications for two bogus businesses. One sought \$324,900 for Mansake Corporation based on five employees and an average monthly payroll of \$129,968. The second requested \$858,000 for Mansake Consulting Corporation based on five employees and an average monthly payroll of \$343,000.
- Each application indicated that Diakhate was the sole owner and that the businesses were located at 162-02 Jamaica Avenue in Jamaica.
- Both loan applications were approved, and on June 29, 2020, and July 14, 2020, checks for \$324,900 and \$858,000 respectively were deposited into Citibank business accounts owned by Diakhate. A total of approximately \$1.2 million was deposited in the accounts.

- In addition to buying the Rolex watch, Diakate spent \$36,874 at Amazon; \$16,461 at Saks Fifth Avenue; \$15,377 at Bergdorf Goodman; and \$13,626 at Bloomingdales; and \$56,247 on travel.
- Before Citibank rescinded the loans, Diakhate spent more than \$350,000 on personal expenses, contrary to the stipulation that monies were to be used exclusively for the operation of the business, including to retain workers and maintain payroll, or to make mortgage, lease and utility payments for the company.

The investigation was conducted by NYPD Detective Jean Remy under the supervision of Sergeant Thomas J. Rouse and Lieutenant William Negus, and by Queens County District Attorney forensic accountant Vivian Tunncliff under the supervision of QDA senior forensic accountant Joseph Plonski.

Assistant District Attorneys Joseph T. Conley III, Bureau Chief of the Frauds Bureau; and Daniel Lewis, Unit Chief of the Revenue Crimes Unit within the Frauds Bureau, are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Hana Kim, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Investigations Division, Gerard A. Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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