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**FOUR INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATION INDICTED IN EXTORTION PLOT  
TO TAKE OVER QUEENS CARTING COMPANY**

*Carting Trucks Allegedly Burned and Containers Stolen; Defendants Face up to 25 Years In Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and Michael J. Mansfield, Chair of the New York City Business Integrity Commission (“BIC”), today announced that four individuals – including three former employees of a Maspeth carting company – have been indicted by a Queens grand jury for attempting to take over the carting company’s business by threatening its owner, setting fire to its trucks and stealing its containers. A corporation owned by one of the defendants has also been charged in the plot.

District Attorney Brown said, “The defendants are accused of trying to strong-arm a businessman into turning over his business to them. Such tactics are a throwback to a bygone era in which threats and intimidation – and oftentimes violence – were rampant. Over the last decade, the City of New York has done much to clean up the private garbage-carting industry. We will continue to work closely with the NYPD, BIC and our other law enforcement colleagues to ensure that such criminal enterprises don’t go unchallenged.”

Commissioner Kelly said, “This was a blatant attempt to muscle a familiar target; the carting industry, by familiar means; intimidation and theft. It was stopped by NYPD detectives and Queens prosecutors who combined forces to bring these suspects to justice.”

BIC Chair Mansfield said, “The acts for which these defendants stand charged of using force and intimidation to gain a competitive advantage and stifle competition in the trade waste industry, relate to the core of the mission of the Business Integrity Commission; namely to insure a free and competitive marketplace where businesses can operate without fear of violence or reprisal. Due to the serious nature of these charges the Commission will move today to immediately suspend the authority of the indicted corporation to do business in the City of New York. I want to thank the Queens County District Attorney for continuing to devote the substantial resources necessary to successfully pursue these complex investigations and prosecutions.”

District Attorney Brown identified the defendants as Salvatore Lombardo, 37, of 36-02 Crescent Street in Astoria, Antonino Mistretta, 36, of 28-35 41<sup>st</sup> Street, also in Astoria, Anthony LaPuma, 44, and his wife, Lisa LaPuma, 41, both of 1292 America Avenue in Babylon, Long Island, and KAT Demolition and Karting Corp., of the same Babylon address.

The five defendants are charged in a 27-count indictment with enterprise corruption (under New York State’s Organized Crime Control Act), third-degree arson, second-degree attempted grand larceny, third-degree grand larceny, first-degree falsifying business records, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing and fourth- and fifth-degree conspiracy. The four individuals, who were arraigned yesterday before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice James P. Griffin, face 25 years in prison if convicted. The corporate defendant faces a fine of up to \$10,000 or double the amount of the illegal gain.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the indictment, Vincent Giuliano, a licensed city carter, reported to New York City Police Department officers assigned to the Business Integrity Commission that he was being extorted and driven out of business by three former employees and another carter. Giuliano alleged that Anthony Lapuma and Antonino Mistretta were prospective partners who used to work for his company, City Haul, but left and formed a new company called KAT Karting and Demolition, in the name of LaPuma’s wife, Lisa, a former City Haul secretary. They are alleged to have stolen carting containers from City Haul as well as many of its customers.

Furthermore, the indictment charges that a business rival, Salvatore Lombardo, threatened Giuliano to try to get him to leave his Maspeth lot so that Lombardo and his new business partners at KAT Karting and Demolition, could take over the space. Lombardo had never, as required, reported his new relationship with his new business partners to the Business Integrity Commission.

It is further alleged that several days after Giuliano had his attorney send a letter to Kat Demolition demanding the return of the containers and more than \$30,000 of accounts receivable illegally collected from his former customers he received a threatening phone call that his trucks would be “torched.” On the evening of September 23, 2006, the FDNY responded to a fire at the truck yard in which two City Haul trucks were ablaze for no apparent accidental or natural causation. Later, on January 4, 2007, it is alleged that Giuliano was approached by Lombardo, who made a threatening gesture – a slashing motion across his throat – and demanded that Giuliano “get out of the lot” because it now belonged to him.

It is further alleged that in January 2007, following Giuliano’s reporting of the matter to the NYPD and BIC, an undercover detective assigned to the NYPD’s Organized Crime Control Bureau began posing as the “new owner” of City Haul. On January 11, 2007, the undercover officer allegedly received an angry telephone call from Lombardo who demanded that he “get out of the lot.” The undercover refused, stating he was the new owner of City Haul, at which point Lombardo allegedly demanded an in-person meeting. Four days later, Lombardo allegedly arrived at the lot and, having identified himself as “Sal from Sagana Industries,” once again demanded that the undercover officer get off the lot while at the same time making a slashing motion across his neck and throwing his hands up like he was about to strike the undercover officer.

The defendants were originally arrested last May on charges of third-degree grand larceny, third-degree criminal possession of stolen property and fifth-degree conspiracy to commit extortion and grand larceny. They had faced, if convicted, a minimum of seven years in prison. The Lapumas are each out on \$25,000 bail. Lombardo is out on \$100,000 bail. Mistretta had been out on \$25,000 until he was arrested in August on a deportation order by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. Thereafter, upon an application by the District Attorney’s Office, he was remanded to the custody of the Corrections Department.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Angelo Barone and Timothy Liffey of the Organized Crime Investigation Division, under the supervision of Sergeant Lee Chong and Captain Paul Inzerillo, and the overall supervision of Inspector Brian O’Neill, working in direct conjunction with Ronald Cohen, Deputy Commissioner of Investigations and Enforcement for the Business Integrity Commission. Detective Al Schwartz, of the Queens District Attorney’s Detective Bureau, also assisted in the investigation, under the supervision of Lieutenant Franco Russo and the overall supervision of Lawrence J. Festa, Chief Investigator and Albert D. Velardi, Deputy Chief Investigator.

Assistant District Attorney Cathy C. Kane, of the District Attorney’s Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief, and Marc P. Resnick, Deputy Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigation Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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