

September 28, 2021

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL'S ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME TASK FORCE ANNOUNCES CHARGES
AGAINST SIX INDIVIDUALS IN STATEWIDE VEHICLE THEFT RING**

Raoul Alleges Group Used Fake Identities to Obtain Luxury Vehicles

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul's Organized Retail Crime Task Force today announced criminal charges in a complex, organized statewide car theft ring. The charges Raoul filed against the man and woman who allegedly organized the scheme and the four men charged who allegedly assisted are the result of a collaboration between Raoul's office, the U.S. Secret Service, the Barrington Police Department and the West Chicago Police Department, as well as partners in the banking, insurance and automotive industries.

Raoul's office is alleging Anthony Brown (who, as a rapper, goes by Tony Sosa), 40, of Lansing, Illinois, and Sierra Wells, 27, of Orland Park, Illinois, organized the scheme. Both were charged with counts of identity theft, a Class X felony; aggravated possession of a stolen motor vehicle, a Class 1 felony; organizing a continuing financial crimes enterprise, a Class 2 felony; theft by deception, a Class 2 felony; financial institution fraud, a Class 2 felony; and forgery, a Class 3 felony. If convicted, Brown and Wells could receive probation or face up to six to 30 years in prison.

In addition, Raoul alleged Kevin Bandy, 48; DeAngelo Hackney, 30; James Krout, 47; and Zebedee Moore, 48, assisted with the enterprise. All four were charged with counts of identity theft, a Class 1 felony; aggravated possession of a stolen motor vehicle, a Class 1 felony; theft by deception, a Class 2 felony; financial institution fraud, a Class 2 felony; and forgery, a Class 3 felony. Each defendant could face two to 15 years in prison.

"These indictments allege that the defendants orchestrated and executed a complex fraud operation that crossed county and even state lines to steal expensive luxury vehicles and defraud car dealerships and financial institutions in the process," Raoul said. "I appreciate the critical support from our federal and local law enforcement partners, as well as our retail partners. Today's charges demonstrate the importance of partnerships and collaborations in order to better protect communities and hold individuals accountable for these complex criminal operations."

Raoul's office was supported during the investigation and prosecution by the offices of DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin's and Cook County State's Attorney Kimberly Foxx.

"The number of luxury vehicle thefts in Chicago and the surrounding counties has skyrocketed this past year," DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin said. "The organizers of these schemes are smart, well organized and determined to obtain these vehicles and move them as fast as they can. That is why it is crucial that we all work together, both public and private sectors, to not only hold these individuals accountable, but to also prevent the thefts from occurring in the first place. I commend Attorney General Raoul and his staff for their work on this case and for taking proactive measures to combat this costly epidemic."

"These indictments should serve as a warning to those who choose to circumvent the law to make illegal profits," Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx said. "The CCSAO was pleased to support the coordinated efforts of our state, local and federal law enforcement partners in this investigation, as we work together to address community concerns around crime not only in Cook County but across Illinois."

In the indictments, Raoul alleged that during the fall of 2020, Brown and Wells allegedly devised a scheme to obtain high-value vehicles by defrauding car dealerships and financial institutions using stolen and fraudulent identities. According to the indictments, Wells provided fake identities to Brown, who used money and drugs to recruit Bandy, Hackney and Krout. Brown, Bandy, Hackney and Krout allegedly utilized the fake identities to apply for financing at car dealerships and purchase luxury vehicles. The enterprise that stretched across Illinois resulted in the loss of around \$100,000 for car dealerships and financial institutions.

Raoul's office worked with the Barrington Police Department and West Chicago Police Department to investigate a pattern of seemingly isolated retail automobile thefts. The investigation spanned years and involved thefts occurring in various Illinois counties and even other states. Raoul's office partnered with Illinois law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Secret Service, as well as entities in the banking, insurance and automotive industries to identify and charge the organizers of this crime.

The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Today's announced indictments are the result of an exhaustive collaboration dedicated to identifying and dismantling a largescale criminal enterprise defrauding the auto industry. The charges follow Attorney General Raoul's recent announcement of his office's Organized Retail Crime Task Force. As with the collaboration that led to the auto theft indictments, the Attorney General's Organized Retail Crime Task Force is the first statewide, public-private collaboration of its kind in Illinois and is designed to foster cooperation among retailers, online marketplaces, law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys dedicated to targeting organized retail crime enterprises. The task force allows Raoul's office to utilize data and tips provided by retailers and partner across jurisdictions with law enforcement agencies, similar to the investigation into today's car theft cases, to investigate organized retail crimes and trace thefts to the source. Raoul's goal in establishing the task force is to improve communication among public and private entities and utilize a multifaceted approach to combatting organized retail theft and related criminal activity.

Bureau Chief John Greenwood and Assistant Attorney General Benjamin Lockyer are handling the cases for Raoul's Special Prosecutions Bureau, and Assistant Attorney Daniel Weiler is handling the cases for Raoul's Trials Assistance Bureau.