



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 WEBSITE CONSULTANT CHARGED WITH LARCENY
FOR SWIPING ABOUT \$233,000 IN CRYPTOCURRENCY
FROM TWO TECH ENTREPRENEURS

*Defendant Hired to Set Up Online Sale of 3,000+ NFTs Allegedly Diverted the Proceeds to His Crypto Wallet;
Faces Up to 15 Years in Prison for Each Larceny if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Nithushan Sachchithanantham, 28, has been charged with grand larceny for stealing the proceeds of an online sale of more than 3,000 non-fungible tokens. The defendant set up an online sale of digital artwork for his two clients and then allegedly diverted nearly \$233,000 in SOL cryptocurrency to his personal cryptocurrency wallets. This case is the first prosecution for the Cyber Crime Unit of the DA's Major Economic Crimes Bureau.

District Attorney Katz said, "Cryptocurrency, NFTs and blockchain may seem difficult to understand but the alleged wrongdoing in this case is simple: stealing money is a crime. The victims wanted to sell their digital artwork as non-fungible tokens with the defendant's technical help. Instead, this website wuz allegedly helped himself to the sellers' \$233,000 in cryptocurrency profits. My office created the Cyber Crime Unit to handle these unique cases that delve into the virtual world we live in today to ensure justice for all victims of crime."

Sachchithanantham, of Hillside Avenue in Queens Village was arraigned last Thursday before Queens Criminal Court Judge Denise Johnson on a two-count complaint. The defendant is charged with grand larceny in the second degree and unlawful possession of personal identification in the third degree. Judge Johnson set the defendant's return date for February 8, 2022. If convicted, Sachchithanantham faces up to 15 years in prison.

According to the charges, last month the defendant was hired as a software consultant. He was tasked with setting up an online sale for two men who wanted to sell uniquely-coded digital artwork, known as non-fungible tokens, on the Solana network. The defendant was contracted to help develop more than 3,000 digital images of crocodiles collectively known as the Solana Swamp and prepare them for an online sale where the NFTs could be purchased using the cryptocurrency SOL. Sachchithanantham set up an online wallet to receive the payments and was paid a consultant fee of \$5,400 worth of cryptocurrency.

Continuing, the DA said, when the sale took place on December 1, 2021, the artwork sold for about \$233,000 worth of SOL cryptocurrency. The victims then noticed that the cryptocurrency funds which are traceable through a public transaction ledger called blockchain were transferred from their own digital wallet into other digital wallets without their permission. When the victims contacted the defendant, Sachchithanantham allegedly ignored their attempts to reach him and did not return their calls or respond to messages.

District Attorney Katz said investigators tracked the cryptocurrency transactions to digital wallets used by the defendant.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Maxwell Runes of the District Attorney's Investigation Squad, under the supervision of Sergeants Joseph Falgiano, Richard Lewis and Lieutenants Steven Brown, Alan Schwartz and under the overall supervision of Deputy Chief Daniel O'Brien. Also assisting in the investigation were members of the Homeland Security Investigations Cyber Division.

Assistant District Attorney Jason Trager, Unit Chief of the Cyber Crime Unit of the Major Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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

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