



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
WESTERN DISTRICT *of* NEW YORK

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

**Federal Grand Jury Indicts Rapids Theatre Owner And Associate
For Defrauding The Economic Injury Disaster Loan And
Paycheck Protection Programs Out Of More Than \$750,000**

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BUFFALO, N.Y.-U.S. Attorney Trini E. Ross announced today that a federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging John L. Hutchins, 68, of Lewiston, NY, and Roberto Soliman, 39, of Niagara Falls, NY, with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud. In addition, defendant Hutchins is charged with making a false statement and defendant Soliman is charged with money laundering. The charges carry a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul E. Bonanno, who is handling the case, stated that the indictment charges Hutchins and Soliman with filing fraudulent loan applications under both the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The loans available for these programs were designed to provide emergency financial assistance pursuant to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES Act). The defendants applied for loans under the following companies owned by defendant Hutchins:

- Rapids Theatre Niagara Falls, USA, Inc.
- 1711 Main, LLC
- Bear Creek Entertainment, LLC
- Hutch Enterprises, LLC
- The Hutchins Agency, LLC
- CWE Entertainment, Corp. (owned by defendant Soliman)

Between March and August 2020, Hutchins and Soliman received four Economic Injury Disaster Loans totaling \$749,500.00. In support of each of the loans, Hutchins and Soliman submitted false revenue and expense figures for the businesses on the loan applications. Hutchins and Soliman used the loan funding for their own personal expenses, such as payments for residential properties in North Tonawanda, NY, and

Lewiston, NY, a 2020 BMW, a 2020 Cadillac, homeowner association fees on a Florida condominium, and payments to relatives.

In addition, Hutchins and Soliman applied for and received a Paycheck Protection Program loan totaling \$74,838.

In November 2020, Hutchins is accused of making a false statement to a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to an Investigator of the United States Attorney's Office, falsely denying applying for, or authorizing anyone to apply for, any Economic Injury Disaster Loans or Paycheck Protection Program loans, with the possible exception of one PPP loan for Rapids Theater.

Soliman is also accused of money laundering for using the fraudulent loan proceeds to pay personal expenses.

The indictment is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Stephen Belongia, the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Thomas Fattorusso, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, under the direction of Rose Brophy, Director of Field Operations, and the New York State Office of Professional Discipline.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - New York, Western

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