



Kenneth P. Thompson
District Attorney
Kings County

May 12, 2016

COMMUNITY PARTNER IN JUSTICE NOTIFICATION

Owner of Vegan Food Business and her Husband Indicted for Allegedly Stealing from Employees, Defrauding Investors, not Paying Taxes

Brooklyn District Attorney Ken Thompson today announced that Sarma Melngailis, the former owner of a high-end family of food companies and her husband, Anthony Strangis, have been indicted for allegedly stealing \$844,000 from investors, shortchanging employees of more than \$40,000 in wages and failing to pay over \$400,000 in sales tax. The defendants instead spent about \$2 million in casinos, on expensive watches and on luxury travel until their business finally closed in July 2015.

Melngailis operated Pure Food & Wine, an upscale vegan restaurant, a juice bar in Manhattan and One Lucky Duck raw food production center and Internet sales office in Brooklyn. She ran all the companies from 630 Flushing Avenue as one enterprise, One Lucky Duck Holdings LLC. Strangis was a regular presence at the companies and exercised authority over the business.

Melngailis and Strangis were apprehended in Sevierville, Tennessee on Tuesday and charged with grand larceny, criminal tax fraud and related counts. The defendants face up to 15 years in prison.

District Attorney Thompson said, "These defendants are accused of repeatedly stealing from and lying to their loyal employees and to investors who poured money into their company. They allegedly gambled away the money or spent it lavishly while leaving everyone else in the lurch. They were finally caught and we intend to now hold them accountable for this outrageous thievery and fraud."

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