



Alleged Fugitive For Three Years Makes Initial Court Appearance

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NEWARK, N.J. – A former Passaic County man who had been a fugitive since being charged in 2009 with multiple crimes in connection with an investigation into several loosely connected Balkan criminal enterprises operating throughout New Jersey, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Canada, and the Netherlands made his initial court appearance today, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Kujtim Lika, 47, (a/k/a “Timmy”) was arrested by the Toronto Police Department/Toronto Task Force in Canada on May 24, 2012. He had been using the alias “Dashmir Cela” at the time of his arrest. He made his initial appearance today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Madeline Cox Arleo in Newark federal court. He was detained without bail.

Three years ago, the FBI, in conjunction with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) charged 26 individuals – including Lika – with numerous crimes, including narcotics and firearms trafficking, money laundering, interstate transportation of stolen property, and criminal conspiracy. The arrests were part of a joint operation between federal agencies that began in late 2003 with targets in Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Canada, the Netherlands and the United States.

Lika’s case has been featured on the television program “America’s Most Wanted.”

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge David Velazquez; Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) HSI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Andrew M. McLees; special agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Donald J. Soranno; and the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor, under the direction of Commissioner Jan Gilhooly.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney David E. Malagold, chief of the Organized Crime/Gangs Unit in Newark.

The charges and allegations against Lika are merely accusations, and the defendant is considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defense counsel: Miles Feinstein Esq., Clifton, N.J.