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ELABORATE FRAUD SCHEME AND LOOTED BUSINESSES LEADS TO 42-COUNT FEDERAL INDICTMENT

A former Los Angeles resident who posed as an attorney and investment banker and allegedly defrauded one couple out of \$40 million was indicted today by a federal grand jury in Los Angeles.

Daniel Nicherie, 44, of Brussels, Belgium, was indicted on 25 counts of wire fraud, 13 counts of money laundering, two counts of bankruptcy fraud, one count of pension fraud and one count of criminal forfeiture.

The indictment alleges that Nicherie defrauded a Los Angeles couple out of approximately \$40 million in cash, real property and businesses. Nicherie told the victims, Ami and Sarit Shafrir, that he could assist them with their business interests. Nicherie then took control of the Shafrirs' companies, drained the companies' assets and then put the companies into bankruptcy. Nicherie is also accused of seizing Sarit Shafrir's personal assets through a similarly elaborate scheme. Nicherie then took a series of steps, including the filing of more than 60 lawsuits, to prevent the Shafrirs from recovering their assets.

Nicherie is also charged with defrauding Ezra and Gil Mileikowsky of Los Angeles out of \$275,000. Nicherie made a series of misrepresentations that caused the Mileikowskys to invest in a purported business which allegedly sold excess inventory over the Internet, as well as a purported venture capital fund. Nicherie lured the Mileikowskys by falsely stating that they could expect a high rate of return on their

investments and that prominent individuals, including Haim Saban, a television and film producer, and Shuki Levy, an Israeli entertainment figure, had invested with Nicherie.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Nicherie was arrested in Las Vegas on March 4, and he was later ordered held without bond by United States District Judge Stephen Wilson in Los Angeles.

If convicted of the charges set forth in the indictment, Nicherie faces a maximum penalty of more than 200 years in federal prison and a fine of more than \$10 million.

Nicherie is scheduled to be arraigned on the indictment on April 12.

This case was investigated by the Department of Labor, IRS-Criminal Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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