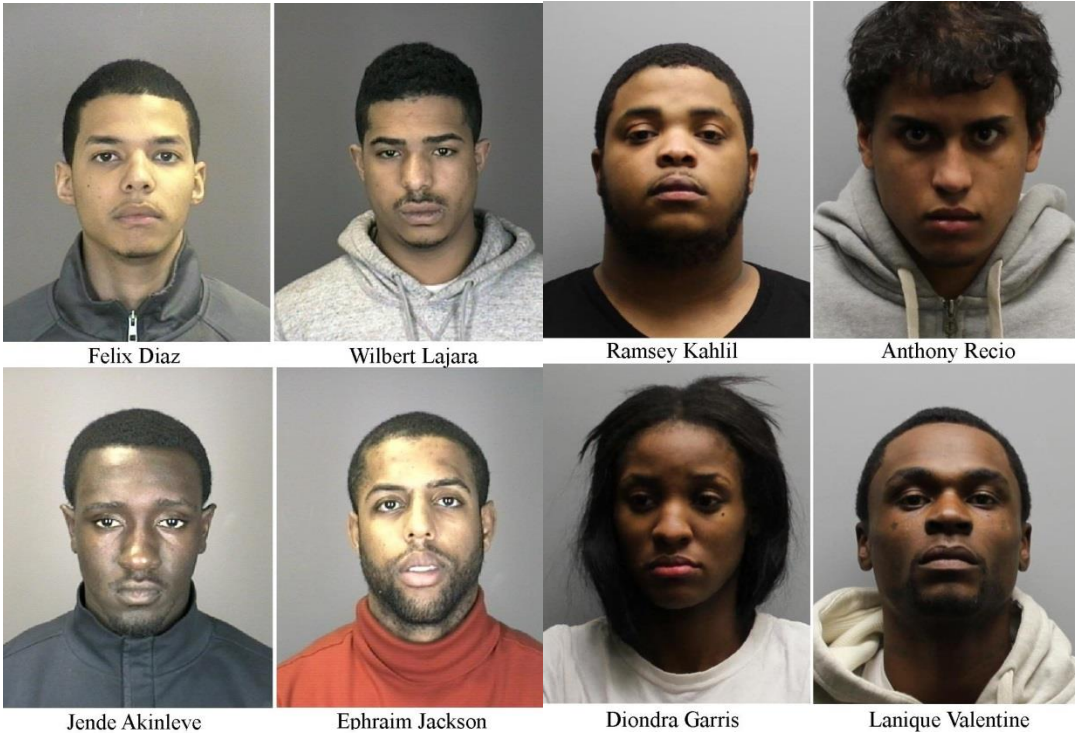




OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
P. DAVID SOARES  
6 LODGE STREET  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207  
(518) 487-5460  
(518) 487-5093 FAX

**CONTACT:** ALBANY COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE (518) 487-5460  
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## Organized Retail Criminals Continue Attack on Albany Businesses



**ALBANY, NY** – District Attorney P. David Soares announced today the ongoing prosecution of

more organized retail crime groups Albany county has been and continues to be a destination location for organized retail criminals. People from outside this community continue to travel here in search of opportunities to exploit our robust retail communities.

“Retailers should be vigilant in training their staff to detect counterfeit money as well as in asking for identification when credit cards are being used,” District Attorney Soares said.

Since late March, three men have pleaded guilty and one was sentenced before the Honorable Judge Thomas A. Breslin for their roles in a counterfeit bill scam.

On November 22, 2014, between the hours of 7 p.m. and 11 p.m., at multiple locations in the town of Colonie, the four defendants did utter and possess counterfeit money. The defendants made small purchases at different businesses in order to get change from fraudulent \$100 bills. The defendants also had in their possession inside of their vehicle additional counterfeit \$100 bills.

EPHRAIM JACKSON, 31, of New York City, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, a Class C Felony, on April 10, 2015. JACKSON was sentenced to 3 2/3 – 11 years in State Prison on July 14, 2015.

JENDE AKINLEYE, 21, of Cortlandt, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, a Class C Felony, on August 6, 2015. AKINLEYE faces 3-9 years in State Prison when sentenced on October 8, 2015.

FELIZ DIAZ, 21, of New York City, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, a Class C Felony, on March 26, 2015. DIAZ faces no more than 3-9 years in State Prison when sentenced on September 9, 2015.

WILBERT LAJARA, 24, of Bronx, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, a Class C Felony, on April 6, 2015. LAJARA faces no more than 3-9 years in State Prison when sentenced on September 9, 2015.

The investigation into the criminal activities of these four was conducted by members of the Colonie Police Department and the United States Secret Service.

Since early April, one man has been sentenced and three others have pleaded guilty before the Honorable Judge Stephen Herrick for their roles in a credit card scam involving 30 fraudulent cards.

On November 17, 2014, at approximately 8:33 p.m. in the Town of Guilderland, the four defendants were stopped for speeding on I-90 by the New York State Police. On their person and in their car, the defendants collectively possessed fraudulent credit and debit cards. Between the four of them, 30 different fraudulent cards were recovered. The New York State Police recovered several iPads, iPods, and other electronics from the vehicle. These items were purchased by members of this group using fraudulent cards from different Best Buy stores.

LANIQUE VALENTINE, 33, of Norfolk, Virginia, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, a Class D Felony, and (1) Count of Conspiracy in the 5<sup>th</sup> Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor, on April 2, 2015. VALENTINE was sentenced to faces 2-4 years in State Prison for his Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument charge and a concurrent 1 year for his Conspiracy charge on May 20, 2015.

KAHLIL RAMSEY, 20, of Brooklyn, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, a Class D Felony, and (1) Count of Conspiracy in the 5<sup>th</sup> Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor, on August 7, 2015. RAMSEY faces 2 ½-5 years in State Prison for his Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument charge and concurrent sentence of 1 year for his Conspiracy charge when sentenced on September 23, 2015.

DIONDRA GARRIS, 21, of Brooklyn, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, a Class D Felony, and (1) Count of Conspiracy in the 5<sup>th</sup> Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor, on June 30, 2015. GARRIS faces no more than 1-3 years in State Prison for her Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument Charge and a concurrent 1 year for her Conspiracy charge when sentenced on August 17, 2015.

ANTHONY RECIO, 21, of Brooklyn, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, a Class D Felony, and (1) Count of Conspiracy in the 5<sup>th</sup> Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor, on May 1, 2015. RECIO faces 1-3 years in State Prison for his Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument Charge and a concurrent 1 year for his Conspiracy charge when sentenced on August 12, 2015.

The investigation into the criminal activities of these four was conducted by members of the New York State Police Department and the United States Secret Service.

The Office of the Albany County District Attorney will continue to diligently prosecute these cases to protect both sellers and buyers.

Financial Crimes Unit Bureau Chief Daniel Lynch is prosecuting these cases.

For more information please contact the Albany County District Attorney's Office at (518) 487-5460.

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