STATE OF MINNESOTA)
) ss. AFFIDAVIT OF TRAVIS WILMER
COUNTY OF BELTRAMI)

1. Your affiant, Travis Wilmer, being duly sworn, does state the following is true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief:

2. I have been employed as a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) since November 8, 2021.

3. As a Special Agent, my primary duties and responsibilities consist of conducting investigations of individuals and businesses for possible violations of federal laws. I am presently assigned to the FBI's Minneapolis, Minnesota field office where I am a member of the Civil Rights and Public Corruption Squad.

4. During my employment as a Special Agent, I have conducted and participated in investigations of varying degrees involving mail fraud, wire fraud, fraud against the government, money laundering, and other criminal acts, including criminal schemes where individuals misappropriate money from the investing public.

5. This affidavit is submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause in support of issuing a complaint and arrest warrant for ABDIAZIZ SHAFII FARAH for making a false statement in a passport application, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1542.

6. This affidavit is based on my personal knowledge, interviews of witnesses, physical surveillance, information received from other law enforcement agents, my experience and training, and the experience of other agents. Because this

affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause in support of the requested complaint and arrest warrant, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause to believe that ABDIAZIZ SHAFII FARAH has committed violations of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1542.

I. PROBABLE CAUSE

A. FARAH is a Target of a Federal Investigation of a Scheme to Misappropriate Millions of Dollars in Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds

7. ABDIAZIZ SHAFII FARAH is one of the targets of the high-profile investigation into a massive scheme to fraudulently obtain and misappropriate millions of dollars in federal child nutrition program funds.

8. During the investigation, the government identified several companies located in and around Shakopee and Savage, Minnesota, that were receiving a suspiciously high amount of reimbursements under the Federal Child Nutrition Program. These companies—including ThinkTechAct Foundation, Empire Cuisine & Market LLC, and Empire Enterprises LLC—worked together to carry out a scheme to fraudulently obtain and launder Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. Collectively, these companies received more than $30 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from approximately May 2020 to January 2022. As explained below, the investigation has shown that FARAH owned and controlled several of these companies and that he and other co-conspirators used them to fraudulently obtain, launder, and misappropriate millions of dollars in Federal Child

Nutrition Program funds that were supposed to be used to provide nutritional meals and food to children.

9. ThinkTechAct Foundation is one of the companies fraudulently receiving and misappropriating Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. According to records obtained from MDE, ThinkTechAct claimed to be serving meals to thousands of children a day at multiple distribution sites. FARAH is a member of ThinkTechAct Foundation's board of directors.

10. Based on these claims, ThinkTechAct received more than $21 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from February 2021 to January 2022. The company received approximately $18,006,479 from Partners in Quality Care and approximately $3,758,133 from Feeding Our Future. These Federal Child Nutrition Program funds represented more than 99 percent of the total funds deposited into ThinkTechAct's U.S. Bank account.

11. A review of ThinkTechAct's bank records show that Individual M.I., the owner of ThinkTechAct, transferred approximately $15,531,971 of these Federal Child Nutrition Program funds to one of a series of companies created by FARAH—Empire Cuisine & Market LLC, Empire Enterprises LLC, and Empire Gas & Grocery LLC. This represented more than 70 percent of the Federal Child Nutrition Program funds received by ThinkTechAct.

Entity	**Amount Received from ThinkTechAct (approximate)**
Empire Cuisine & Market LLC	$12,242,852
Empire Enterprises LLC	$3,189,119

Empire Gas & Grocery LLC	$100,000
Total	**$15,531,971**

12. The "memo" lines on most of the checks indicated that these payments from ThinkTechAct to Empire Cuisine & Market were for the purchase of food or meals to serve as part of the Federal Child Nutrition Program. But, as explained below, bank records show that FARAH and his companies did not use most of this money to purchase food or serve meals. Instead, FARAH used his company to misappropriate and launder Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. FARAH also kicked back a portion of the funds to Individual M.I., the CEO of ThinkTechAct.

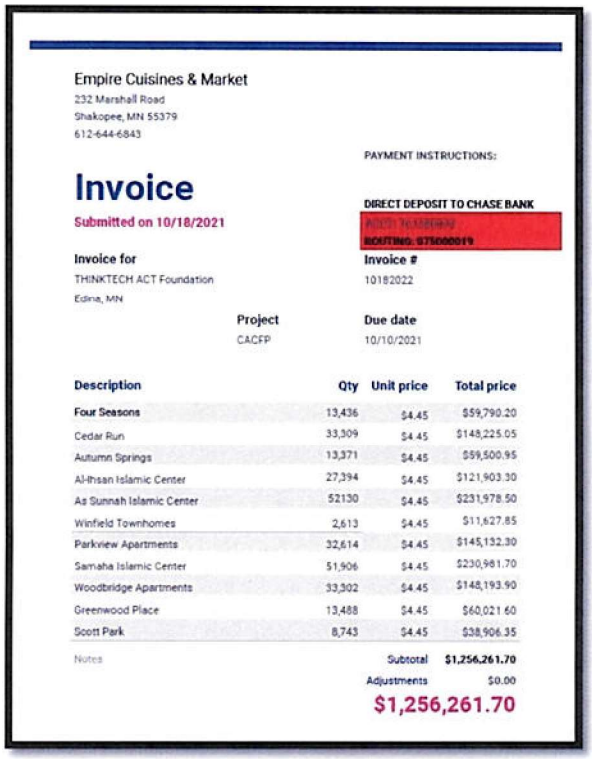
B. Empire Cuisine & Market LLC

13. Empire Cuisine & Market LLC is a small storefront restaurant and market located in a strip mall in Shakopee, Minnesota. According to Minnesota Secretary of State records, FARAH formed Empire Cuisine & Market LLC on or about April 1, 2020.



14. Bank records show that ThinkTechAct sent more than $12 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds to Empire Cuisine & Market LLC between approximately February 2021 and January 2022. The memo lines on the check indicated that the payments were for the purchase of food or meals to be served as part of the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

15. FARAH and Individual M.I. prepared paperwork purporting to show that these payments were for the purchase of meals. For example, on or about October 19, 2021, Individual M.I. submitted for payment an invoice from Empire Cuisine & Market. The invoice claimed that Empire Cuisine & Market had provided approximately 282,306 meals at 11 Federal Child Nutrition Program sites in September 2021. The invoice indicated that Empire Cuisine & Market was entitled to $1,256,261 in payments from ThinkTechAct for meals provided in September 2021.



Empire Cuisines & Market
232 Marshall Road
Shakopee, MN 55379
612-644-6843

PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

Invoice

DIRECT DEPOSIT TO CHASE BANK
[redacted]
ROUTING: 075000019

Submitted on 10/18/2021

Invoice for
THINKTECH ACT Foundation
Edina, MN

Invoice #
10182022

Project
CACFP

Due date
10/10/2021

Description	Qty	Unit price	Total price
Four Seasons	13,436	$4.45	$59,790.20
Cedar Run	33,309	$4.45	$148,225.05
Autumn Springs	13,371	$4.45	$59,500.95
Al-Ihsan Islamic Center	27,394	$4.45	$121,903.30
As Sunnah Islamic Center	52130	$4.45	$231,978.50
Winfield Townhomes	2,613	$4.45	$11,627.85
Parkview Apartments	32,614	$4.45	$145,132.30
Samaha Islamic Center	51,906	$4.45	$230,961.70
Woodbridge Apartments	33,302	$4.45	$148,193.90
Greenwood Place	13,488	$4.45	$60,021.60
Scott Park	8,743	$4.45	$38,906.35

Notes

Subtotal $1,256,261.70
Adjustments $0.00
$1,256,261.70

16. In addition to the $12 million it received from ThinkTechAct, Empire Cuisine & Market also received more than $12 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds during this same period directly from the two agencies that sponsored its participation in the Federal Child Nutrition Program—Partners in Quality Care and Feeding Our Future. Again, these payments were intended to serve as reimbursements for the cost of providing meals as part of the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

17. In all, bank records show that Empire Cuisine & Market received approximately $11,346,307 from Partners in Nutrition between May 2020 and January 2022 and an additional approximately $794,157 from Feeding Our Future between April and June 2021. These funds were deposited into accounts held by Empire Cuisine & Market at U.S. Bank, JP Morgan Chase, and Old National Bank. FARAH was signatory on the accounts.

18. These funds, like the funds from ThinkTechAct, were ostensibly reimbursements for food and meals provided and served by Empire Cuisine & Market as part of the Federal Child Nutrition Program. But, as explained below, little of this money was used to provide food or serve meals. Instead, FARAH misappropriated much of this money. He also sent money to an array of individuals involved in the scheme, including the CEO of ThinkTechAct, Individual M.I. Many of these transactions involved shell companies that appear to have been set up to launder and conceal the proceeds of the fraud scheme.

Entity	Relationship to FARAH	Amount
Empire Enterprises LLC	Owned by FARAH	$2,310,786
Individual M.J.I.	Co-Owner of Empire Cuisine & Market	$2,214,089
FARAH		$1,177,964
Bushra Wholesaler	Owned by FARAH's brother, Individual S.F.	$1,081,854
MIB Holdings LLC (Individual M.I.)	Owned by CEO of ThinkTechAct	$915,300
BBI LLC		$848,978
Individual S.F.	FARAH's brother	$322,729
Individual M.I.	CEO of ThinkTechAct	$42,000
Total		**$8,913,700**

19. In addition, as explained below, FARAH used millions of dollars in Federal Child Nutrition Programs funds received by Empire Cuisine & Market to purchase real estate and cars.

C. Empire Enterprises LLC

20. As explained above, bank records show that another company owned by FARAH, Empire Enterprises LLC, received approximately $3,189,199 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from ThinkTechAct in 2021. Again, the memo lines on the checks indicate that the money was being paid for the purchase of food or meals from Empire Enterprises.

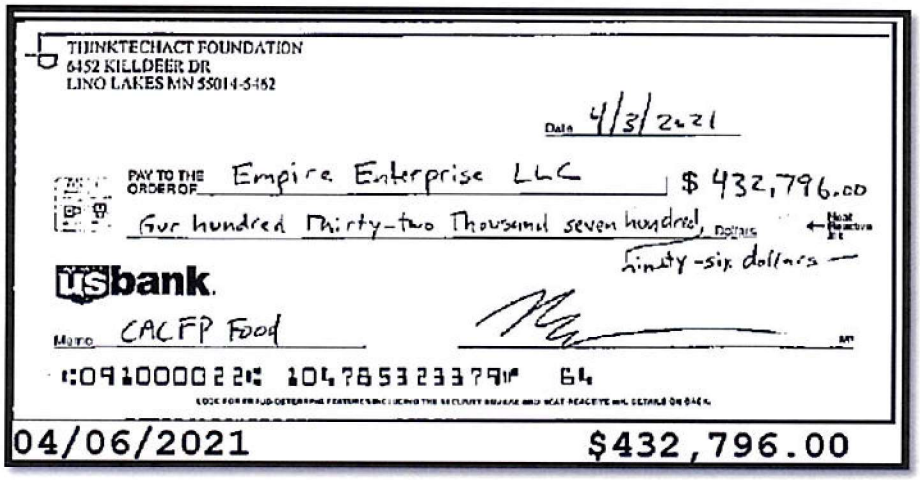
21. Bank records further show that FARAH also transferred approximately $2,310,786 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from Empire Cuisine & Market to Empire Enterprises between April and July 2021.

22. At first glance, these payments were made to appear as though they were for the purchase of food or meals to be served as part of the Federal Child

Nutrition Program. But this was not true. Bank records show that little or none of the money paid to Empire Enterprises was used to purchase food or meals. Instead, FARAH used Empire Enterprises and its bank accounts to launder and misappropriate Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. He also used the company to kick back misappropriated Federal Child Nutrition Program funds to Individual M.I., the CEO of ThinkTechAct, and others involved in the scheme.

23. Minnesota Secretary of State records show that FARAH formed Empire Enterprises LLC on or about April 5, 2021. FARAH listed his home address in Savage, Minnesota as the registered office address for Empire Enterprises.

24. On or about April 6, 2021—the day after he formed Empire Enterprises—FARAH opened a bank account on behalf of his new company at Old National Bank. FARAH deposited a $432,796 check from ThinkTechAct into the account on the day he opened it. The memo line indicated that the check was for "CACFP Food." The check was dated April 3, 2021—two days before FARAH registered Empire Enterprises LLC with the Minnesota Secretary of State.


THINKTECHACT FOUNDATION
6452 KILLDEER DR
LINO LAKES MN 55014-5462

Date 4/3/2021

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Empire Enterprise LLC $ 432,796.00

Four hundred Thirty-two Thousand seven hundred, Dollars
Ninety-six dollars

usbank.

Memo CACFP Food

:091000022: 104786532337911 64

04/06/2021 $432,796.00

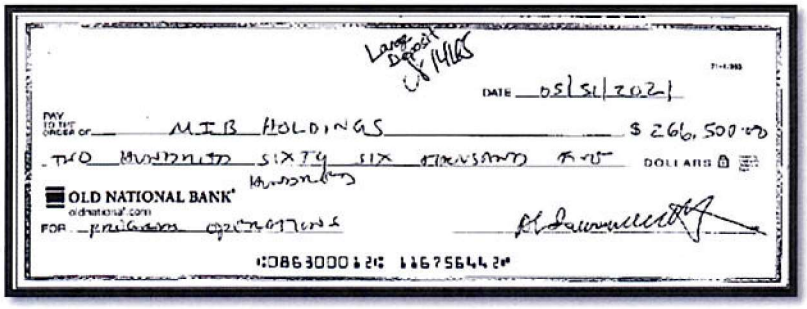
25. Approximately two weeks later, on or about April 23, 2021, FARAH wrote a check for $100,000 to MIB Holdings LLC. The memo line indicated that the payment was for "consulting."



26. According to Minnesota Secretary of State records, MIB Holdings LLC is a company owned by Individual M.I., the CEO of ThinkTechAct.

27. Over the course of the next five weeks, FARAH wrote two more checks to Individual M.I.'s company, MIB Holdings LLC. The memo line on the checks indicated that the payments were for "program consulting" and "program operations."





28. In all, bank records show that FARAH paid approximately $538,829 to Individual M.I.'s company out of the Empire Enterprises account.

Date	Amount to MIB Holdings	Memo Line
April 23, 2021	$100,000	Consulting
May 11, 2021	$172,329	Program Consulting
May 31, 2021	$266,500	Program operations
Total	**$538,829**	

29. FARAH also paid approximately $915,300 to Individual M.I.'s company, MIB Holdings LLC, out of the Empire Cuisine & Market accounts. All of these funds came from the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

30. These funds were deposited into accounts held by MIB Holdings LLC at Spire Federal Credit Union. Individual M.I. was the sole signatory on the accounts. Individual M.I. appears to have used MIB Holdings LLC and its bank account to launder and conceal misappropriated Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. Bank records show that more than $1,454,000 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds were deposited into the accounts from Empire Cuisine & Market LLC and Empire Enterprises LLC.

31. Individual M.I. also deposited $570,000 into the MIB Holdings LLC's account from Bushra Wholesalers LLC, an entity created by FARAH's brother, Individual S.F. The checks indicated that the payments were for "consulting."

Date (approximate)	Memo Line	Amount from Bushra Wholesalers to MIB Holdings
July 7, 2021	Consulting	$189,000
August 9, 2021	Consulting Program Management	$221,456

September 3, 2021	Program Mgmt/Consulting	$159,800
	Total	$570,256

32. But these payments, which occurred between July and September 2021, appear to have been designed to launder misappropriated Federal Child Nutrition Program funds received by ThinkTechAct and create the false impression that funds were being used to purchase food. Specifically, bank records show that Individual M.I. had previously paid $1,392,322 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from ThinkTechAct to Bushra Wholesalers LLC from between February and July 2021. The memo line on the checks indicated that the payments were for food.

Date (approximate)	**Memo line**	**Amount from ThinkTechAct to Bushra Wholesalers**
February 16, 2021	Food storage	$100,000
February 24, 2021	Food	$15,000
February 26, 2021	Food	$40,000
June 11, 2021	CACFP Food	$212,061
June 18, 2021	CACFP Food	$212,061
June 22, 2021	CACFP Food	$289,750
June 25, 2021	CACFP Food	$228,950
July 27, 2021		$294,500
	Total	**$1,392,322**

33. Bank records show that little or none of this money sent to MIB Holdings LLC was used to purchase food or provide meals to underprivileged children. Instead, Individual M.I. converted the money to his own personal use. For example, in 2021, Individual M.I. sent $620,000 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from MIB Holdings LLC to a custom home builder in Columbus, Ohio.

34. Records obtained from the home builder show that Individual M.I. made these payments for the construction of a new home on an empty lot in Lewis Center, Ohio. The total price of the project was approximately $936,000.

35. Individual M.I. also sent approximately $30,000 from MIB Holdings LLC to Coinbase.com, a cryptocurrency exchange, in May and June of 2021.

D. Empire Cuisine & Market Received approximately $2.5 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from a Company Created by a Member of the Partners in Nutrition Board of Directors

36. Bank records show that Empire Cuisine & Market received approximately $2.5 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from a company called The Free Minded Institute. As explained below, The Free Minded Institute was created and controlled by Individual J.S., who is a member of the board of directors of Partners in Quality Care, d/b/a Partners in Nutrition, the entity that sponsored Empire Cuisine & Market's participation in the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

37. Minnesota Secretary of State records show that Individual J.S. created The Free Minded Institute on or about July 29, 2021.

38. MDE records show that Individual J.S. is a member of the board of directors of Partners in Quality Care, d/b/a Partners in Nutrition. Individual J.S. also works as an employee of Partners in Nutrition in a "Site Support" position.

39. In or about October 2021, Individual J.S. opened a bank account on behalf of The Free Minded Institute. The address listed on the account is a single-family home located on the 600 block of Iglehart Avenue in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Individual J.S.'s grandmother lives in the home. On or about May 18, 2022, federal agents spoke with Individual J.S.'s grandmother. She said that Individual J.S. receives mail at the residence but that he does not live there. She said that she had never heard of The Free Minded Institute.

40. Approximately two months after being formed, The Free Minded Institute began receiving Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from Partners in Nutrition. Bank records show that The Free Minded Institute received approximately $2,496,989 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from Partners in Nutrition between approximately October 2021 and January 2022. All of the money deposited into The Free Minded Institute's bank account was Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from Partners in Nutrition.

41. Bank records show that The Free Minded Institute sent almost all of the Federal Child Nutrition Program funds it received from Partners in Nutrition to Empire Cuisine & Market or its owner, FARAH. For example, on or about November 12, 2021, Individual J.S. wrote a $595,000 check from The Free Minded Institute to Empire Cuisine for "October Food Service." Similarly, on or about January 14, 2022, Individual J.S. wrote a check for $850,000 from The Free Minded Institute to Empire Cuisine & Market for "Dec. Catering."

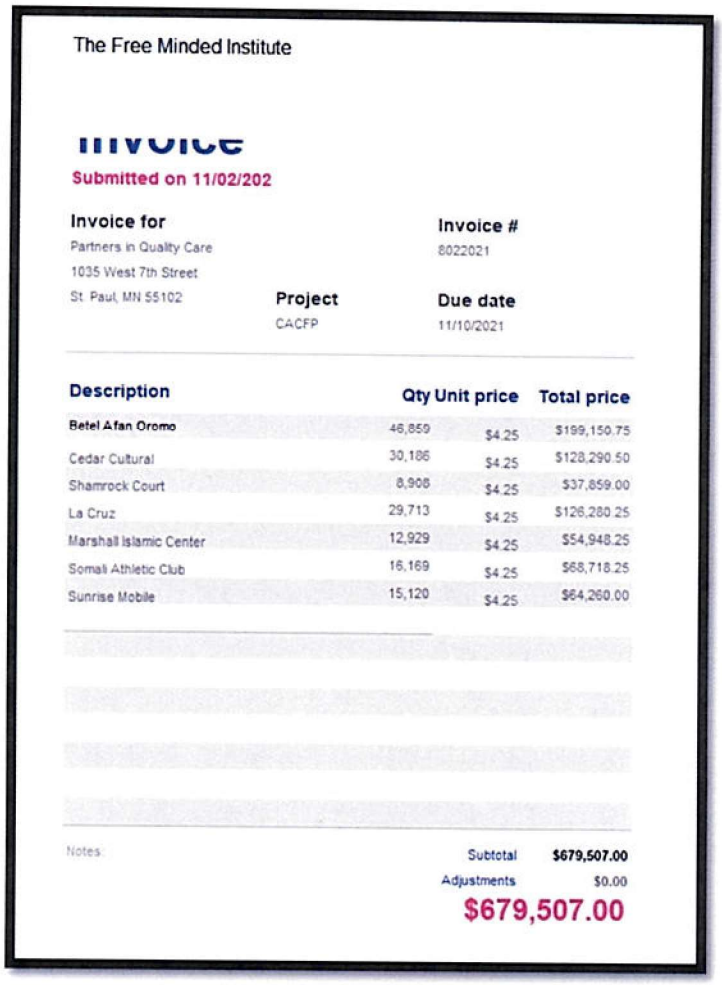
42. In all, bank records show that Empire Cuisine & Market and FARAH received approximately $2,428,030 from The Free Minded Institute between October 2021 and January 2022. This represented more than 97 percent of the

Federal Child Nutrition Program funds that The Free Minded Institute received from Partners in Nutrition.

43. For his part, Individual J.S. withdrew approximately $13,400 in cash from The Free Minded Institute's account between November 2021 and February 2022. He also spent approximately $3,500 on restaurants and meals, more than $900 on GoPuff.com, an online food and alcohol delivery company, and more than $1,000 at liquor stores.

44. FARAH and his companies, in turn, sent money to Individual J.S. On or about July 31, 2021—just two days after registering The Free Minded Institute with the Minnesota Secretary of State—Individual J.S. received a $1,000 check from Empire Cuisine & Market. The memo line on the check indicated that the payment was for "program consulting." Approximately two weeks later, on or about August 13, 2021, Individual J.S. received an additional $10,000 in "Associate Fees" from Empire Enterprises LLC.

45. On or about November 2, 2021, the manager of Empire Cuisine & Market, Individual A.N., sent an email with the subject line "FMI October Invoice" to the executive director of Partners in Nutrition. Individual J.S. was copied on the email. Attached to the email was an invoice from The Free Minded Institute to Partners in Nutrition dated November 10, 2021. The invoice claimed that The Free Minded Institute was entitled to approximately $679,507 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from Partners in Nutrition for having provided more than 150,000 meals at seven federal child nutrition program sites.



The Free Minded Institute

Invoice

Submitted on 11/02/202

Invoice for
Partners in Quality Care
1035 West 7th Street
St. Paul, MN 55102

Project
CACFP

Invoice #
8022021

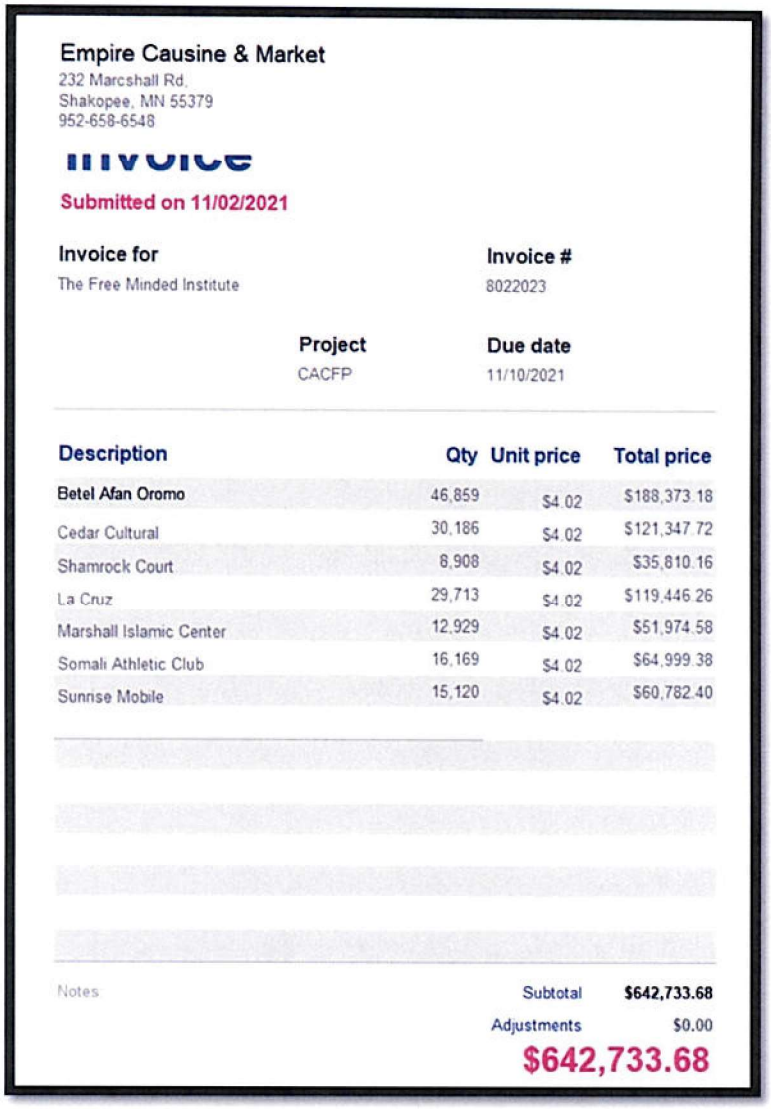
Due date
11/10/2021

Description	Qty	Unit price	Total price
Betel Afan Oromo	46,859	$4.25	$199,150.75
Cedar Cultural	30,186	$4.25	$128,290.50
Shamrock Court	8,908	$4.25	$37,859.00
La Cruz	29,713	$4.25	$126,280.25
Marshall Islamic Center	12,929	$4.25	$54,948.25
Somali Athletic Club	16,169	$4.25	$68,718.25
Sunrise Mobile	15,120	$4.25	$64,260.00

Notes

Subtotal $679,507.00
Adjustments $0.00
$679,507.00

46. Approximately one minute after that November 2, 2021 email was sent, Individual A.N. sent an email with the subject line "Empire October Invoice" to Individual J.S. Attached to the email was an invoice from Empire Cuisine & Market to The Free Minded Institute dated November 10, 2021. The invoice claimed that The Free Minded Institute owed Empire Cuisine & Market approximately $642,733 for providing those same 150,000 meals at federal child nutrition program sites.



Empire Causine & Market
232 Marcshall Rd.
Shakopee, MN 55379
952-658-6548

Invoice

Submitted on 11/02/2021

Invoice for
The Free Minded Institute

Invoice #
8022023

Project
CACFP

Due date
11/10/2021

Description	Qty	Unit price	Total price
Betel Afan Oromo	46,859	$4.02	$188,373.18
Cedar Cultural	30,186	$4.02	$121,347.72
Shamrock Court	8,908	$4.02	$35,810.16
La Cruz	29,713	$4.02	$119,446.26
Marshall Islamic Center	12,929	$4.02	$51,974.58
Somali Athletic Club	16,169	$4.02	$64,999.38
Sunrise Mobile	15,120	$4.02	$60,782.40

Notes

Subtotal $642,733.68
Adjustments $0.00
$642,733.68

47. This represented approximately 5 percent less than the invoice that The Free Minded Institute submitted to Partners in Nutrition, suggesting that Individual J.S. was going to be keeping approximately 5 percent of the Federal Child Nutrition Programs received from Partners in Nutrition.

E. FARAH and his Companies Received more than $30 Million in Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds

48. In all, bank records show that FARAH's companies received more than $32 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds between approximately May 2020 and January 2022. This included more than $15 million in payments from ThinkTechAct as well as nearly $13 million in payments from Partners in Quality Care and Feeding Our Future. Federal Child Nutrition Program funds represented more than 90 percent of the total deposits into the companies' bank accounts.

49. A review of these accounts shows that most of this money was not used to buy food or other items related to participation in the Federal Child Nutrition Program. Instead, the most significant withdrawals from the Empire Cuisine & Market bank accounts were to limited liability companies controlled by Empire Cuisine & Market owners. This money was then used to purchase real estate, vehicles, and to send money abroad.

F. FARAH Used Fraudulently Obtained and Misappropriated Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds to Purchase Real Estate

50. Bank records show that FARAH used millions of dollars in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds to purchase houses and other real estate.

1. FARAH Used $575,000 in Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds to Purchase a Home in Savage, Minnesota

51. FARAH used Federal Child Nutrition Programs funds from the Empire Enterprises LLC account to purchase a single-family home located at 15418 Hampshire Lane in Savage, Minnesota.



52. FARAH currently resides at 15418 Hampshire Lane as of January 2022.

53. Bank records show that on or about April 15, 2021, FARAH transferred $575,000 from the Empire Enterprises LLC account at Old National Bank to Trademark Title Services. The wire transfer documents indicated that the funds were for the purchase of 15418 Hampshire Lane, Savage, Minnesota.

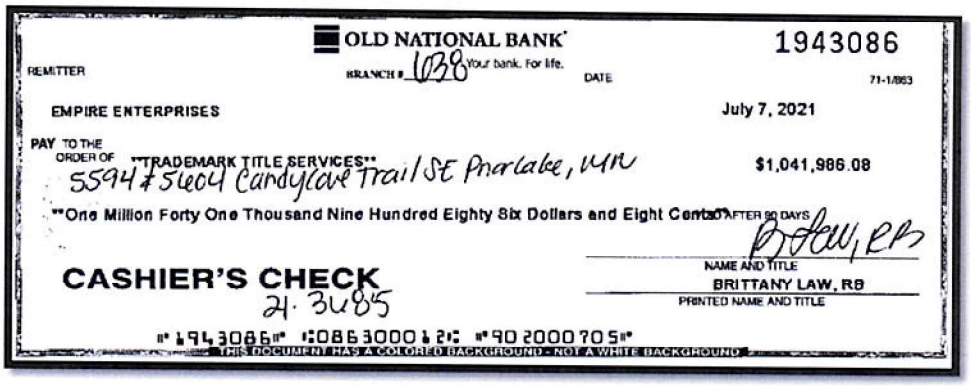
54. All of the funds used to purchase 15418 Hampshire Lane were derived from Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. After being received from the sponsoring entity, the funds were transferred to one or more other companies in an effort to launder and conceal the source of the funds.

2. FARAH Purchased Two Lots on Prior Lake for More than $1 Million

55. FARAH purchased two lakefront lots on Prior Lake for more than $1 million using misappropriated Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

56. FARAH purchased these lots with a $1,041,992 check from Empire Enterprises LLC. The check, dated July 7, 2021, was payable to Trademark

Title Services. The addresses "5594 & 5604 Candy Cove Trail SE, Prior Lake, MN" were handwritten on the check.


OLD NATIONAL BANK
Your bank. For life.
1943086
REMITTER
BRANCH # 1038
DATE
71-1/853
EMPIRE ENTERPRISES
July 7, 2021
PAY TO THE ORDER OF **TRADEMARK TITLE SERVICES**
5594 & 5604 Candy Cove Trail SE Prior Lake, MN
$1,041,986.08
One Million Forty One Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Six Dollars and Eight Cents
AFTER 90 DAYS
NAME AND TITLE
BRITTANY LAW, RB
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE
CASHIER'S CHECK
21-3485
⑈1943086⑈ ⑆086300012⑆ ⑈90 2000 70 5⑈
THIS DOCUMENT HAS A COLORED BACKGROUND - NOT A WHITE BACKGROUND

57. A review of bank records shows that all of the money used to obtain this cashier's check was derived from fraudulently obtained Federal Child Nutrition Program funds received by ThinkTechAct Foundation or Empire Enterprises LLC.

58. This check was used to purchase two lakefront lots on Prior Lake. These lots are located in an upscale residential neighborhood on Prior Lake. According to Minnesota Department of Revenue records, Empire Enterprises LLC purchased these lots on or about July 26, 2021, for $1.1 million in cash.

3. FARAH Sent $1.5 Million in Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds to a Custom Home Builder

59. In 2021, FARAH paid $1.5 million to a company that specializes in custom home building and remodeling in the south and southwestern metro area. According to records obtained pursuant to grand jury subpoena, the money was to be used to build an 8,000-square foot custom home for FARAH on the two lakefront lots he purchased on Prior Lake. The building plans refer to the project as "The Farah Residence" and indicate that FARAH is the homeowner. According to records

obtained from the builder, the Farah Residence was projected to cost approximately $2.5 million.



60. Bank records show that FARAH used Federal Child Nutrition Program funds to pay the custom home builder, including:

a. a $500,000 check from the Empire Cuisine & Market LLC account at Old National Bank on or about March 19, 2021;

b. a $150,000 check for "project construction" from the Empire Cuisine & Market LLC account at Old National Bank on or about July 8, 2021; and

c. a $250,000 check for "construction" from the Old National Bank account on or about May 15, 2021.

4. In October 2021 FARAH Purchased a Townhouse in Burnsville, Minnesota, for $335,000 in Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds

61. In or about October 2021, FARAH purchased a townhouse in Burnsville, Minnesota, using Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. The townhouse was located at 438 Stonewood Lane, Burnsville, Minnesota.

62. FARAH signed a purchase agreement to buy 438 Stonewood Lane on or about September 26, 2021. The purchase price was $335,000. Empire Enterprises LLC was listed as the buyer. FARAH signed the purchase documents as the "Chief Manager" of Empire Enterprises LLC.

63. Bank records show that on or about October 12, 2021, FARAH wired approximately $334,632 from an account held by Empire Enterprises LLC at JP Morgan Chase to Trademark Title Services. This money funded the purchase of 438 Stonewood Lane. Bank records show that the money in the account was traceable to Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

5. FARAH Sent $1 Million to a Kentucky LLC for use in Purchasing Real Estate in Louisville, Kentucky

64. FARAH also sent approximately $1 million from Empire Cuisine & Market to BBI LLC, a Kentucky limited liability company, in 2021. The money was used to purchase real estate in Louisville, Kentucky.

65. Kentucky Secretary of State records show that BBI LLC was created on or about March 22, 2021. Approximately ten days later, on or about April 2, 2021,

FARAH wrote a check for $345,500 from Empire Cuisine & Market to BBI LLC. Over the next several months, FARAH wrote several more checks to BBI LLC. In all, FARAH sent approximately $1,032,687 to BBI LLC—approximately $996,000 from Empire Cuisine & Market and another $35,000 from a personal account. Bank records show that essentially all of the money in the BBI LLC were Federal Child Nutrition Program funds from FARAH.[1]

66. BBI LLC used money it had received from FARAH to purchase real estate in Louisville, Kentucky. In May 2021, BBI LLC purchased a commercial building located at 3847 Cane Run Road in Louisville, Kentucky, for approximately $208,091.



67. In October 2021, BBI LLC used money it received from FARAH to purchase an old church located at 6200 South 3rd Street in Louisville, Kentucky. According to closing records, BBI LLC paid approximately $10,000 earnest money

[1] Another entity involved in the scheme, Bushra Wholesalers, also sent approximately $56,332 to BBI LLC. As discussed above, Bushra Wholesalers was a company created by FARAH's brother to obtain, launder, and misappropriate Federal Child Nutrition Program funds obtained by ThinkTechAct and FARAH's companies.

and signed over to the closing attorney four checks totaling approximately $436,293 it had received from FARAH. The property was titled to "Masjid Bilal Islamic Center Inc." and is encumbered by a promissory note payable to BBI LLC.





G. FARAH Purchased Five Cars Using Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds in 2021

68. The investigation has revealed that FARAH purchased at least five cars in 2021 using funds derived from the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

1. FARAH purchased a 2021 Jeep Wrangler in May 2021

69. On or about May 15, 2021, FARAH purchased a 2021 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited for approximately $79,000. FARAH purchased the car using a $79,389 check from an account held by Empire Cuisine & Market LLC.

70. A review of bank records show that Federal Child Nutrition Program funds were used to purchase this jeep.

2. FARAH purchased a 2021 Porsche Macan in August 2021

71. In August 2021, FARAH traded in his Jeep Wrangler for credit towards the purchase of a 2021 Porsche Macan SUV. Records obtained from the car dealership show that FARAH purchased the Porsche Macan for approximately $79,000. FARAH received a $63,000 trade-in allowance for the Jeep Wrangler. He funded the balance of the purchase price with a $29,095 check from an Empire Cuisine & Market account.

72. Minnesota Department of Motor Vehicle records show that FARAH is the registered owner of the 2021 Porsche Macan.

73. A review of bank records show that the funds FARAH used to purchase both the Jeep Wrangler and the Porsche Macan were traceable to Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

3. FARAH Purchased a 2021 GMC Sierra Pickup Truck in August 2021

74. In August 2021, FARAH purchased a 2021 GMC Sierra pickup truck using $65,000 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. FARAH purchased the GMC Sierra pickup truck using a $65,005 check from Empire Cuisine & Market LLC.

75. According to Minnesota Department of Motor Vehicle records, the GMC Sierra is registered to Empire Cuisine & Market.

76. Again, bank records show that the money used to purchase this truck was derived from the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

4. FARAH purchased a 2021 Nissan Murano SUV in October 2021

77. In October 2021, FARAH purchased a 2021 Nissan Murano luxury SUV using Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

78. Specifically, bank records show that on or about October 30, 2021, FARAH wrote a $47,019 check from an Empire Cuisine & Market account at JP Morgan Chase to the Luther Nissan Kia dealership in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. The check was used to purchase a 2021 Nissan Murano SUV.

79. Minnesota Department of Motor Vehicle records show that the vehicle is registered to Empire Cuisine & Market LLC. FARAH's name is also listed on the vehicle's title.

5. FARAH Purchased a 2022 Tesla Model Y Sedan in December 2021

80. FARAH also purchased a 2022 Tesla Model Y sedan for approximately $80,000 in December 2021.

81. Bank records show that FARAH paid for the Tesla via a $80,753 debit card transaction through his personal bank account at JP Morgan Chase. A review of bank records show that the funds in this account prior to this debit card transaction were traceable to Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

H. The Government Seized More than $6 Million in Fraud Proceeds from FARAH on January 20, 2022

82. In January 2022, federal agents obtained federal seizure warrants to seize the funds in accounts held by FARAH and his entities, Empire Cuisine & Market LLC and Empire Enterprises LLC, on the grounds that the funds were proceeds of the scheme to fraudulently obtain, launder, and misappropriate Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. Federal agents executed these warrants on January 20, 2022. In all, agents seized approximately $6,172,242 from these accounts.

Bank	Account Holder	Amount Seized (approximate)
JP Morgan Chase	Empire Cuisine & Market LLC	$4,000,422
JP Morgan Chase	Empire Enterprises LLC	$1,286,805
JP Morgan Chase	ABDIAZIZ SHAFII FARAH	$460,319
US Bank	Empire Cuisine & Market LLC	$424,695
	Total	**$6,172,241**

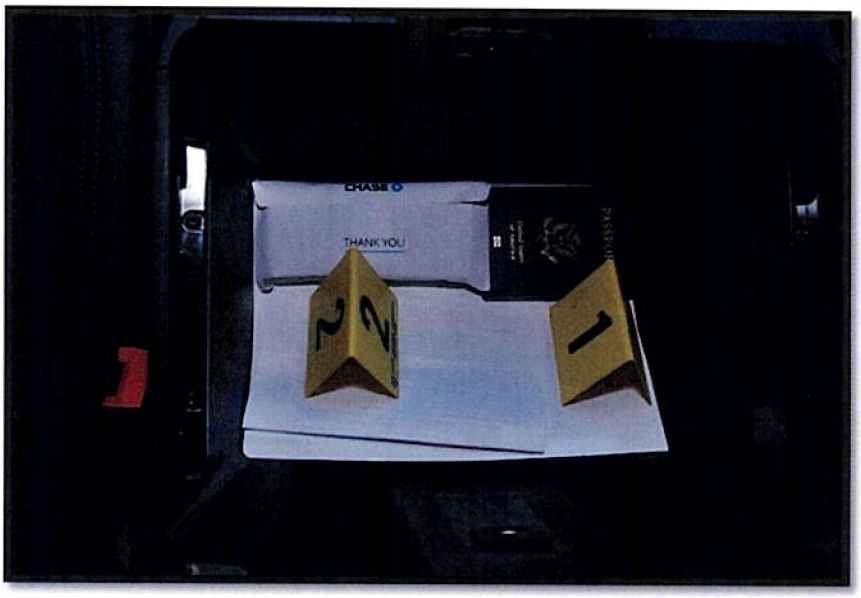
83. FARAH was the sole signatory on each of these accounts.

I. Federal Agents Seized Four Vehicles and More than $65,000 in Cash from FARAH's Residence in January 2022

84. Federal agents also executed a search warrant at FARAH's home in Savage, Minnesota, on January 20, 2022. During the search, agents found parked at the residence four of the vehicles that FARAH had purchased using Federal Child

Nutrition Program funds—the 2021 Porsche Macan, the 2021 Nissan Murano, the 2021 GMC Sierra, and the 2022 Tesla Model Y. Federal agents seized each of these vehicles.

85. In the course of seizing the 2021 GMC Sierra pickup truck, agents conducted an inventory search of the truck. During the inventory search, agents found FARAH's U.S. passport and an envelope containing approximately $18,000 in cash in the center console of the vehicle



86. Agents also found a laptop bag in the rear passenger seat of the vehicle. There was approximately $42,500 in cash inside of the laptop bag.





J. FARAH Sent More than $1.5 Million in Federal Child Nutrition Program Funds to Kenya and China in 2021

87. During the search of FARAH's residence, agents recovered receipts for more than $800,000 in international wire transfers from entities controlled by FARAH to entities in China. Bank records show that all of the money sent to China was traceable to Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

Date	Source of Wire	Beneficiary Location	Amount
February 18, 2021	Empire Cuisine & Market LLC	Qingdao Safco Tire Co., Ltd Qingdao, China	$131,632
March 1, 2021	Empire Cuisine & Market LLC	Prinx Chengshan (Shandon) Tire Co., Ltd. Rongchen City, China	$80,000
March 31, 2021	Empire Cuisine & Market LLC	Prinx Chengshan (Shandon) Tire Co., Ltd. Rongchen City, China	$189,787
May 6, 2021	Empire Enterprises LLC	Prinx Chengshan (Shandon) Tire Co., Ltd. Rongchen City, China	$197,789
May 14, 2021	Empire Enterprises LLC	Junan Lishun Arts and Craft Co. Ltd. Shandong, China	$227,582
		Total	**$826,790**

88. FARAH was listed as the authorized signer for each of these international wire transfers.

89. Bank records show that FARAH made additional wire transfers to China that were unrelated to food purchases. On or around March 12, 2021, $216,728 was wired from the Empire Cuisine & Market LLC account at Old National Bank to Jiangxi Enda Linen Co. Ltd. in Jiangxi, China. On or about March 23, 2021, FARAH wired $197,872 from Empire Cuisine & Market LLC to Bright Element Limited in Hong Kong to "purchase diesel engines."

90. Agents also recovered records of international wire transfers from entities controlled by FARAH to Nairobi, Kenya. The first receipt showed that on or about May 11, 2021, FARAH transferred $300,000 from an account held by Empire Enterprises LLC to Capital View Properties LLC in Nairobi, Kenya. The wire receipt listed FARAH as the authorized signer on the account.

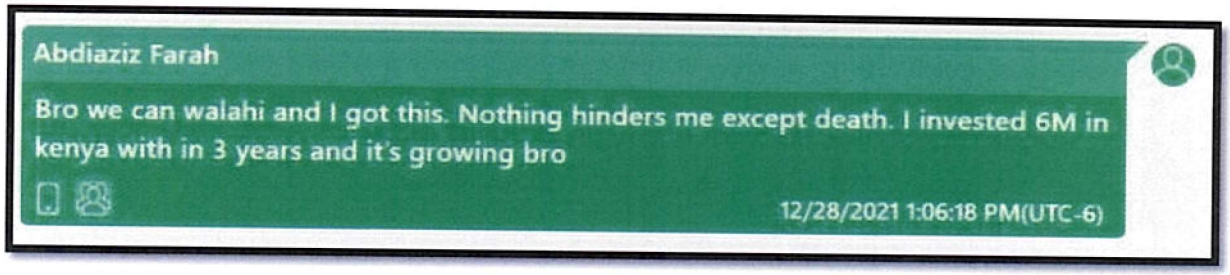
91. Agents also recovered a June 1, 2021, receipt documenting a $206,428 wire transfer from Empire Enterprise LLC account at Old National Bank to Capital View Properties LLC in Nairobi, Kenya. Again, the wire receipt listed FARAH as the authorized signer on the account.

92. Bank records show that FARAH wired an additional $204,795 from Empire Enterprises to Capital View Properties in Nairobi, Kenya, on or about May 4, 2021.

93. In all, bank records show that FARAH wired more than $700,000 from Empire Enterprises to Nairobi, Kenya, in 2021.

Date	**Source of Wire**	**Beneficiary**	**Amount (approximate)**
May 4, 2021	Empire Enterprises LLC	Capital View Properties Nairobi, Kenya	$204,795
May 11, 2021	Empire Enterprises LLC	Capital View Properties Nairobi, Kenya	$300,000
June 1, 2021	Empire Enterprises LLC	Capital View Properties Nairobi, Kenya	$206,428
		Total	**$711,223**

94. In addition to these transfers, FARAH told Individual M.I. that he has invested $6 million in Kenya over the past three years. During the search of FARAH's residence, agents recovered his cell phone. A search of his cell phone shows that FARAH exchanged messages with Individual M.I. over the WhatsApp messaging app. In a message sent on or about December 28, 2021, FARAH told Individual M.I. that he had invested $6 million in Kenya over the past three years.



K. FARAH made False Statements on his Application for a New U.S. Passport

95. The current investigation became public on January 20, 2022, when federal agents executed search warrants at more than 20 locations around the Twin Cities, including FARAH's home in Savage and the office of Empire Cuisine & Restaurant in Shakopee.

96. During the execution of the search warrant on FARAH'S residence in Savage, federal agents seized FARAH's U.S. passport card. At the conclusion of the search, agents provided FARAH with a receipt detailing the property seized from his residence. This inventory list specified that agents had seized "US Passport Card Abdiaziz S. Farah XXXX2274."

97. As noted above, agents also seized a truck belonging to FARAH on January 20, 2022. During an inventory of the truck's contents, agents found FARAH's U.S. passport book.

98. In the wake of the search warrants, the press has regularly covered the scheme to fraudulently obtain Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. This press coverage has included FARAH's role in the scheme. According to an article published on February 3, 2022, FARAH founded and ran a charter school in Burnsville,

Minnesota.[2] Individual M.I., the owner of ThinkTechAct Foundation, previously served on the charter school's board of directors. The article reported that FARAH took a leave of absence effective January 21, 2022, the day after his role in the scheme became public.

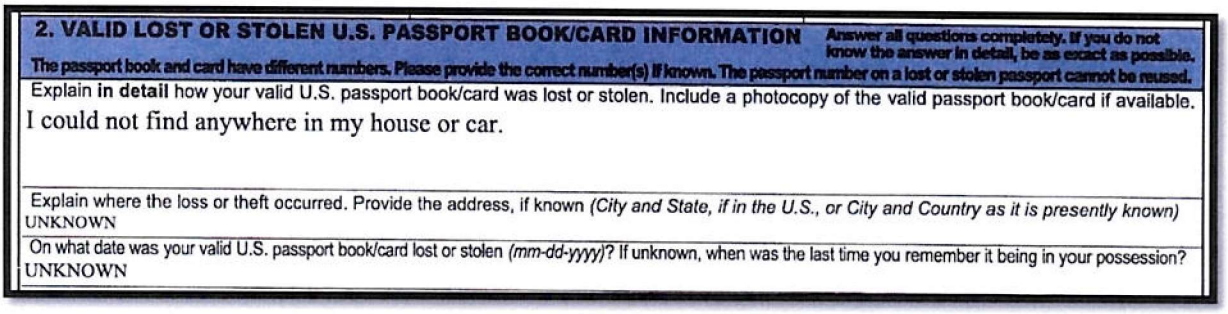
99. On or about March 22, 2022, FARAH applied for a new U.S. Passport. He submitted his application to the Minneapolis Passport Agency in Minneapolis, Minnesota. According to his application, FARAH was born in Mogadishu, Somalia and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2012.

100. FARAH's application indicated that he had previously been issued both a U.S. passport book and a U.S. passport card. FARAH indicated on the application that his most recent U.S. passport card had been lost.

101. FARAH also submitted a Statement Regarding a Lost or Stolen U.S. Passport Book and/or Card, known as Form DS-64, as part of his U.S. passport application. On the Form DS-64, FARAH falsely represented that he had lost his U.S. passport. FARAH explained that he "could not find anywhere in my house or car." In the box asking him to "[e]xplain where the loss or theft occurred," FARAH said "unknown." Similarly, in the box asking when the passport was lost or stolen, FARAH stated "unknown."

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[2] https://sahanjournal.com/education/feeding-our-future-abdiaziz-farah-mahad-ibrahim/ (last accessed May 20, 2022).



2. VALID LOST OR STOLEN U.S. PASSPORT BOOK/CARD INFORMATION Answer all questions completely. If you do not know the answer in detail, be as exact as possible.

The passport book and card have different numbers. Please provide the correct number(s) if known. The passport number on a lost or stolen passport cannot be reused.

Explain **in detail** how your valid U.S. passport book/card was lost or stolen. Include a photocopy of the valid passport book/card if available.

I could not find anywhere in my house or car.

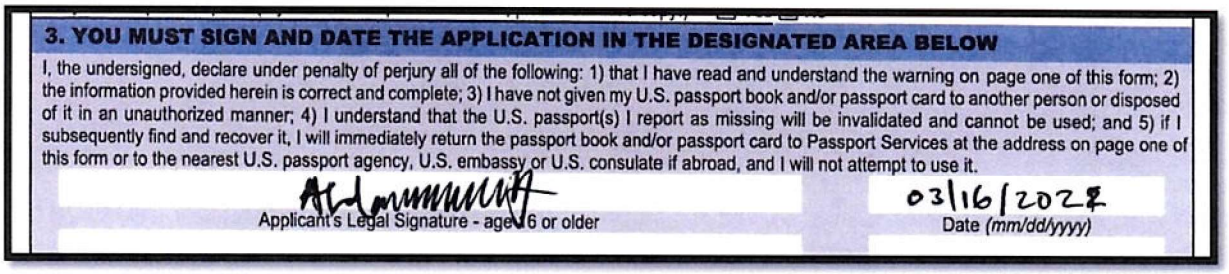
Explain where the loss or theft occurred. Provide the address, if known *(City and State, if in the U.S., or City and Country as it is presently known)*

UNKNOWN

On what date was your valid U.S. passport book/card lost or stolen *(mm-dd-yyyy)*? If unknown, when was the last time you remember it being in your possession?

UNKNOWN

102. FARAH signed the Form DS-64 under penalty of perjury.



3. YOU MUST SIGN AND DATE THE APPLICATION IN THE DESIGNATED AREA BELOW

I, the undersigned, declare under penalty of perjury all of the following: 1) that I have read and understand the warning on page one of this form; 2) the information provided herein is correct and complete; 3) I have not given my U.S. passport book and/or passport card to another person or disposed of it in an unauthorized manner; 4) I understand that the U.S. passport(s) I report as missing will be invalidated and cannot be used; and 5) if I subsequently find and recover it, I will immediately return the passport book and/or passport card to Passport Services at the address on page one of this form or to the nearest U.S. passport agency, U.S. embassy or U.S. consulate if abroad, and I will not attempt to use it.

Applicant's Legal Signature - age 16 or older

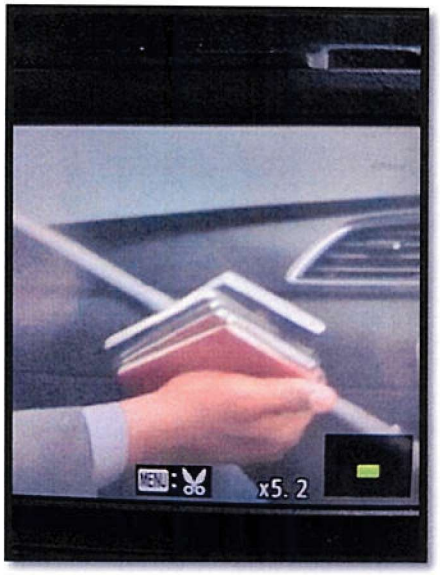
03/16/2022

Date *(mm/dd/yyyy)*

103. Based on FARAH's application, the U.S. Department of State issued FARAH a new U.S. passport on March 22, 2022.

104. On or about March 16 2022, FARAH booked a one-way flight from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport to Nairobi, Kenya (via Newark International Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport). The flight was scheduled to depart on March 24, 2022. FARAH did not board the flight.

105. On or about May 19, 2022, federal agents conducted surveillance at FARAH's store, Empire Cuisine & Market. At approximately 11:00 a.m. on May 19, 2022, agents observed FARAH enter the store. At approximately 12:15 p.m., agents observed an unidentified man enter the store. The man appeared to be carrying a stack of passports.



II. CONCLUSION

106. Based on the facts set forth above, and based on my training, experience, knowledge, and the aforementioned facts of this investigation, there is probable cause to believe that ABDIAZIZ SHAFII FARAH has violated 18 U.S.C. § 1542 (false statement in passport application).

Respectfully submitted,

FBI Special Agent Travis Wilmer

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN before me by reliable electronic means (FaceTime and email) pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 41(d)(3) on May ___, 2022 May 20, 2022

The Honorable Jon T. Huseby
United States Magistrate Judge