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FUGITIVES INVOLVED IN CHARITY THEFT OF \$18,000 ARRESTED

Hunterdon County Prosecutor Anthony P. Kearns, III and Chief of Detectives John Kuczynski, announced that fugitives Michelle Gaughan, age 41, and Philip Gaughan, age 36, have been arrested in connection with the theft of over \$18,000 raised for charity. The Gaughan's were indicted on November 17, 2016 by a Hunterdon County Grand Jury on charges of third-degree theft by failure to make required disposition of property received, and third-degree conspiracy. On November 28, 2016, the Gaughans became fugitives from justice when they failed to appear in court and warrants were issued for their arrests.

In March 2016, DB Charity Fundraising, operated by Michelle and Phillip Gaughan, were hired by Diamond Nation, of Raritan Township, to raise money for various charities around the area. The events rose over \$18,000 that was earmarked for these charities. Mr. and Mrs. Gaughan gave a check to Diamond Nation for \$18,000 but it was later returned by the bank for lack of funds. The Gaughans then disappeared and the Diamond Nation used their own funds to make the \$18,000 payout to the charities.

On December 8, 2016, Michelle Gaughan voluntarily surrendered to police and was released on her own recognizance. On December 13, 2016, Phillip Gaughan was arrested in Clayton, Delaware. Phillip Gaughan was extradited to New Jersey and lodged in the Somerset County Jail in default of \$20,000 bail.

According to Prosecutor Kearns, "These are crimes that take advantage of the generosity of the citizens and businesses in our community. These two individuals thought they could get away from responsibility in these cases but law enforcement remained vigilant and they were brought to justice."

Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-321-0010 or by going to www.crimestoppershunterdon.com, or text messaging "HCTIPS" plus your tip message to 274637 (CRIMES). Tipsters can also download the free mobile app "Tipsubmit" and select Hunterdon County to submit anonymous tips via text messaging. All tips are anonymous and kept confidential.

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