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# Newsday

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## COLLEGE TEST CHEATING SCANDAL



# BOOKED

## 11 arrested, 2 more face charges

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PHOTOS BY HOWARD SCHNAPP

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# BUSTS IN TEST SCANDAL

More arrested in Nassau DA's widening cheating probe

Eleven current and former students of North Shore high schools were arrested yesterday and face criminal charges for "choosing to scam the system" by cheating on college admission tests, Nassau District Attorney Kathleen Rice said.

Two more suspects are expected to surrender Monday, Rice spokesman John Byrne said.

The widening investigation found nine more students paid four test takers to impersonate them and take the SAT and ACT exams between 2008 and 2011. It brings the total number of students implicated in the cheating probe to 20, Rice said.

"It's fair to say that this was so systematic that people knew who to go to when they needed a high score," Rice said at a news conference in Mineola. "It was a business, and it was run like a business."

The cheating scandal has rocked some parts of the affluent North Shore, where students attend some of the nation's top-ranked high schools.

Rice identified the test takers as Joshua Chefec, 20, a graduate of Great Neck North; Adam Justin, 19, a graduate of North Shore Hebrew Academy High School; George Trane, 19, a graduate of Great Neck South High School; and Michael Pomerantz, 18, who attended Great Neck North.

Chefec, Justin and Trane were led in handcuffs to their arraignment

This story was reported by **Ann Givens, Chau Lam, Kery Murakami, Emily Ngo** and **John Hildebrand**. It was written by **Givens**.

**NOW ONLINE**  
Watch a video of  
the news conference  
for more about the  
arrests.  
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ment yesterday in First District Court in Hempstead, where they pleaded not guilty to charges of scheme to defraud, falsifying business records and criminal impersonation. They were released without bail. Chefec attends Tulane University; Justin, Indiana University; and Trane, Stony Brook University.

Pomerantz is expected to surrender Monday because of a medical condition, the district attorney's office said. The defendants face 4 years in prison, if convicted.

Eight other students, accused of paying others between \$300 to \$1,000 to take the tests, arrived at court yesterday, hiding their faces under hats, hoods and scarves, and were arraigned on misdemeanor charges. Those students include five alumni of Great Neck North,

one who attended North Shore Hebrew Academy, one who graduated from Roslyn High School and one from Great Neck South. A ninth student, who attends St. Mary's High School in Manhasset, declined to surrender and officials said they plan to arrest that person.

The students charged with misdemeanors will be prosecuted as youthful offenders, their cases will be sealed and they will not be identified, officials said.

In September, six former and current Great Neck North students were arrested after prosecutors said they paid a former student to pose as them and take the SAT. Prosecutors said one student arrested yesterday paid Sam Eshaghoff, 19, the former student, \$3,600. The probe has since expanded, and Rice said her office has looked at as many as 40 possible cheaters, but can charge only a fraction of them because of issues involving evidence and the statute of limitations.

There is no evidence that the students' parents provided the money to hire the test takers, but the investigation is continuing, Rice said.

Prosecutors said they would not seek prison for those convicted. The district attorney's office also has convened a special grand jury to investigate cheating on the tests, sources close to the probe have confirmed. That probe could result in criminal in-

The alleged  
test takers

**Joshua Chefec**

**Age:** 20

**High School:** Great Neck North

**Now attends:** Tulane University

**Accused of:**

Taking the ACT and SAT for same student

**Scores earned, according to prosecutors:**

31 on ACT (perfect score is 36), SAT score not available.

**Fees paid, according to prosecutors:**

**\$300-\$500**

dictments, a report or recommendations on the panel's findings, sources and experts said.

At the news conference, Rice pressed ETS, the Princeton, N.J.-based company that administers the SAT for the College Board, to boost test security. "This is a system begging for security enhancements," Rice said.

Thomas Ewing, a spokesman

for ETS, yesterday said it will upgrade security procedures if that is warranted. Ewing noted that the College Board has hired a consulting group run by former FBI director Louis Freeh to review test-security protocols.

A spokesman for ACT also said it was reviewing protocols in light of the investigation.

Michael DerGarabedian, a



## Adam Justin

**Age:** 19  
**High School:** North Shore Hebrew Academy  
**Attends:** Indiana University  
**Accused of:** Taking the SAT and ACT  
**Score earned:** 1920 on SAT (perfect score is 2400), ACT score not available.  
**Fee paid, according to prosecutors:**  
**\$500**

## George Trane

**Age:** 19  
**High School:** Great Neck South  
**Now attends:** Stony Brook University  
**Accused of:** Taking the ACT for two students  
**Scores earned:** 28 and 29 (Perfect score is 36)  
**Fees paid, according to prosecutors:**  
**\$1,000** per test

## Awaiting arrest: Michael Pomerantz

<b>Age:</b> 18	<b>High School:</b> Great Neck North	<b>Attends:</b> Unknown	<b>Accused of:</b> Taking the SAT for one student	<b>Score, according to prosecutors:</b> 1710 (perfect score is 2400)	<b>Fee, according to prosecutors:</b> <b>\$500</b>
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Rockville Centre attorney representing one of the students who prosecutors say paid others to take the test, said the scandal reflects a larger problem in society.

"If these charges are proven, these kids should be held accountable," he said. But citing widely publicized cases of insider trading and athletes using steroids, he said it's not surpris-

ing that some kids have misguided values. "We need to re-evaluate the expectations we place on kids these days, and how we define success."

Chefec's attorney, Brian Griffin of Garden City, said his client was charged with taking a test for a student in 2008, and that Chefec's school looked into the allegations and deemed them

"unfounded." He said, "Pushing an agenda by using the criminal justice system on the backs of schoolchildren is wrong."

Another attorney, Eric Sachs, said his client Trane denies the accusation that he took two tests for someone else in 2008. He said such accusations could be disastrous for a defendant. "If they are in school, they could get

kicked out of school. If they have a job, they could lose their job," said Sachs, of Bellmore.

Justin's attorney, Arnold Kriss of Manhattan, said, "Notwithstanding this frenzy, the presumption of innocence applies in this case."

At the news conference, Rice said criminal charges are warranted. "This is a crime," she

said. "You're talking about thousands of dollars changing hands so kids can submit fraudulent test results to get into a better school. The true victims are the ones who take a backseat to the cheaters."

**TURN PAGE FOR MORE TEST COVERAGE**