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STATE ATTORNEY**



**ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Social Media Personality Charged in New Year's Eve Incident

Miami (January 7, 2021) Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle and Miami Beach Police Chief Richard Clements announce the charging of social media personality and entrepreneur Benjamin Kapelushnik, (popularly known as Benjamin Kicks or Benjamin Kickz), after a December 31st, 2020 incident at The Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach.

“Internet fame or celebrity grants no one the right to violate the law,” said State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. “The actions that put a young man in the hospital are crimes, plain and simple. The accumulated evidence, once placed before our criminal court, will make that point clear.”

At approximately 1:00 A.M. on New Year's Eve, 19-year-old Luel Alemu and some friends were together in the lobby of the hotel and became involved in a verbal disagreement with another group of males, including 21-year-old Benjamin Kapelushnik. Kapelushnik is a known social media personality recognized for selling high-end sneakers to wealthy clients. Kapelushnik and his entourage allegedly believed that Alemu had taken a picture of Kapelushnik without his permission and allegedly demanded Alemu's phone. Mr. Alemu repeatedly explained that he did not take a photograph of Kapelushnik. Despite the explanation, Kapelushnik and his entourage allegedly continued demanding the phone. The argument moved from the hotel lobby out to the exterior front entrance driveway of the hotel.

Mr. Alemu again refused to hand over his phone indicating that he did not take a photograph of Kapelushnik. Kapelushnik then allegedly grabbed the phone out of Alemu's hand and walked away with it. Alemu was then allegedly attacked by members of Kapelushnik's entourage, who allegedly beat, punched and kicked him continuously in the head and body causing serious injuries. One of Mr. Alemu's friends, who witnessed the entire incident, allegedly saw Kapelushnik snatch the phone from Alemu and allegedly saw the entourage group beat and batter Alemu. This same friend was allegedly able to recover the cell phone from Kapelushnik. Mr. Alemu sustained serious injuries during the incident which still requires hospitalization and surgery.

Benjamin Kapelushnik has been charged with:

- 1 count Strongarm Robbery - 2nd Degree Felony

Kapelushnik was booked into the Dade County Jail this morning and is pending a bond hearing.

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