



WORLD & NATION

Accused Swindler Is Ordered Jailed as a Flight Risk

By David Rosenzweig

March 26, 2004 12 AM PT

TIMES STAFF WRITER

A Las Vegas businessman accused of swindling two families out of more than \$40 million was taken into custody Thursday after a federal judge in Los Angeles found that he was an “extreme flight risk” and no bail conditions could reasonably assure his appearance at trial.

After hearings that spilled over two days, U.S. District Judge Stephen Wilson reversed a decision by a federal magistrate judge in Las Vegas that let Daniel Nicherie, 44, remain free on his own recognizance.

Nicherie was arrested two weeks ago on a complaint issued by the U.S. attorney’s office in Los Angeles, charging him with seven counts of wire fraud, bankruptcy fraud and pension fraud.

He was taken before U.S. Magistrate Judge Peggy A. Leen in Las Vegas, who ruled that he was a flight risk but allowed him to go free with the proviso that he wear an ankle bracelet and carry a device that would monitor his movements.

Within hours, however, U.S. District Judge Manuel Real in Los Angeles, acting on a request by prosecutors, countermanded Leen’s ruling, setting off a legal tug of war that sent the controversy to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The appeals court sided with Leen, but when Real overruled her again, the appellate judges ordered Real off the case and directed that it be assigned to another judge.

Wilson did not elaborate on his reasons for ordering Nicherie jailed. Over the course of the hearings, however, the judge appeared focused on Nicherie's conduct after he was indicted on bank fraud charges in Houston in 1992.

ADVERTISEMENT

Assistant U.S. Attys. Stephen Olson and Douglas Fuchs contended that Nicherie fled the country and went to Israel after the indictment was returned.

Defense lawyer David Chesnoff countered that Nicherie was unaware of the indictment when he left the United States. He said his client had returned voluntarily once he learned of the indictment. Nicherie pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a year in prison.

At Thursday's hearing, Wilson heard testimony that before leaving the United States, Nicherie had been told about the indictment by his lawyer in the Texas case. Chesnoff conceded that Nicherie's conduct in that case did "create concern," but argued that it happened 12 years ago.

Nicherie now has strong roots in the Las Vegas community, he said, and is the father of five children, including one who suffers from a chronic illness. The defense attorney said he planned to appeal Wilson's ruling.

Nicherie, a naturalized U.S. citizen who emigrated from Israel when he was 17, is accused of defrauding an Israeli-born couple, Ami and Sarit Shafrir of Beverly Hills, of an estimated \$40 million in cash, property and their businesses. According to the criminal complaint, Nicherie then filed more than 100 civil lawsuits against the Shafrirs to prevent them from recovering their assets and forcing their companies into bankruptcy.

He also is charged with defrauding Ezra and Gil Mileikowsky of Los Angeles of \$275,000 in cash that he promised to invest for them but allegedly kept for himself. Prosecutors said he falsely told the Mileikowskys that he had made similar investments for some wealthy and prominent Israelis.

More to Read

FOR SUBSCRIBERS

The 'crypto kids' of Los Angeles: Easy money, risky lives and a violent fallout

March 24, 2026



Film producer charged with paying credit cards with coronavirus funds, defrauding investors

May 22, 2020

Judge freezes assets of famed L.A. lawyer Tom Girardi, citing millions unpaid to clients

Dec. 14, 2020



Sign up for Essential California

The most important California stories and recommendations in your inbox every morning.

By continuing, you agree to our [Terms of Service](#), which include arbitration and a class action waiver. You agree that we and our third-party vendors may collect and use your information, including through cookies, pixels and similar technologies, for the purposes set forth in our [Privacy Policy](#) such as personalizing your experience and ads.

Login or register with email

Agree & Continue

Copyright © 2026, Los Angeles Times | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [CA Notice of Collection](#) | [Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information](#)