PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Soldier Charged With Using Classified Information To Profit From Prediction Market Bets

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For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Gannon Ken Van Dyke allegedly made more than $400,000 trading on polymarket on the basis of classified information regarding the timing of a U.S. military operation to capture Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela

The Justice Department announced today the unsealing of an indictment charging Gannon Ken Van Dyke, a U.S. Army soldier, with unlawful use of confidential government information for personal gain, theft of nonpublic government information, commodities fraud, wire fraud, and making an unlawful monetary transaction. The charges arise from an alleged scheme in which Van Dyke used sensitive classified information to make wagers on Polymarket, a prediction marketplace. As alleged in the indictment, Van Dyke participated in the planning and execution of the U.S. military operation to capture Nicolás Maduro, called “Operation Absolute Resolve,” and Van Dyke used his access to classified information about that operation to personally profit. Van Dyke will be presented today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Brian S. Meyers in the Eastern District of North Carolina. The case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge Margaret M. Garnett in the Southern District of New York.

"Our men and women in uniform are trusted with classified information in order to accomplish their mission as safely and effectively as possible, and are prohibited from using this highly sensitive information for personal financial gain," said Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche. "Widespread access to prediction markets is a relatively new phenomenon, but federal laws protecting national security information fully apply."

"Today's announcement makes clear no one is above the law, and this FBI will do whatever it takes to defend the homeland and safeguard our nation's secrets," said FBI Director Kash Patel. "Any clearance holders thinking of cashing in their access and knowledge for personal gain will be held accountable."

"Prediction markets are not a haven for using misappropriated confidential or classified information for personal gain," said U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton for the Southern District of New York. "The defendant allegedly violated the trust placed in him by the United States Government by using classified information about a sensitive military operation to place bets on the timing and outcome of that very operation, all to turn a profit. That is clear insider trading and is illegal under federal law. Those entrusted to safeguard our nation's secrets have a duty to protect them and our armed service members, and not to use that information for personal financial gain. Our Office will continue to hold accountable those who misuse confidential or classified information in a way that undermines and exploits our national security."

"Gannon Ken Van Dyke allegedly betrayed his fellow soldiers by utilizing classified information for his own financial gain," said FBI Assistant Director in Charge James C. Barnacle Jr. "Van Dyke profited more than $400,000 by trading various outcomes related to Venezuela after learning of the operation because of his role as a U.S. Army soldier. The FBI will continue to investigate threats to our nation's security especially from those entrusted to safeguard sensitive classified information and military operations."

As alleged in the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court, Van Dyke has been an active-duty soldier in the U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Bragg, a military base located in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In connection with his work, Van Dyke signed nondisclosure agreements in which he promised to "never divulge, publish, or reveal by writing, words, conduct, or otherwise . . . any classified or sensitive information" relating to military operations. Starting around Dec. 8, 2025, and continuing through at least Jan. 6, Van Dyke was involved in the planning and execution of Operation Absolute Resolve, a military operation to capture Maduro, and had access to sensitive, nonpublic, classified information about that operation.

In 2025, Polymarket, a prediction marketplace operated by Blockratize Inc., began offering binary event contracts related to whether certain events involving Venezuela and/or Maduro would, or would not, occur. Those event contracts included the future likelihood of "US forces in Venezuela by" certain dates, the future likelihood of Maduro being "out" of or removed from power by certain dates, the future likelihood of the U.S. invading Venezuela by on or before Jan.

31, and the future likelihood of President Trump "invoking War Powers against Venezuela" by a certain date.

As alleged, on or about Dec. 26, 2025, Van Dyke created a Polymarket account, funded it, and began trading on Maduro- and Venezuela-related markets. In total, Van Dyke made approximately 13 bets from Dec. 27, 2025, through the evening of Jan. 26. Those bets all took the "YES" position on "U.S. Forces in Venezuela . . . by January 31, 2026"; "Maduro out by . . . January 31, 2026"; "Will the U.S. invade Venezuela by . . . January 31,"; or "Trump invokes War Powers against Venezuela by . . . January 31." Van Dyke bet a total of approximately $33,034 on those outcomes while in possession of classified nonpublic information about Operation Absolute Resolve.

In the predawn hours of Jan. 3, the U.S. apprehended Maduro and his wife at a residence in Caracas, Venezuela, and hours later the President of the United States announced the successful operation. Following the President's public announcement, Polymarket resolved several Maduro- and Venezuela-related contracts to "YES," including the markets "Maduro out by . . . January 31, 2026," and "US forces in Venezuela by . . . January 31, 2026." As a result, Van Dyke won his wagers on those contracts. In total, Van Dyke allegedly profited approximately $409,881.

Following his successful trading relating to Maduro- and Venezuela-related contracts, Van Dyke allegedly sent most of his proceeds to a foreign cryptocurrency vault before depositing them into a newly created online brokerage account. The same day of the operation, Van Dyke withdrew the majority of his allegedly unlawful proceeds from his Polymarket account. Shortly after the announcement of Operation Absolute Resolve, reports of unusual trading in Maduro-related contracts on Polymarket appeared in the press and on social media. Van Dyke then took steps to conceal his identity as the trader in the Maduro- and Venezuela-related markets. On or about January 6, 2026, for example, Van Dyke asked Polymarket to delete his Polymarket account, falsely claiming that he had lost access to the email address to which the account had been associated. That same day, Van Dyke changed the email registered to his cryptocurrency exchange account to an email address that was not subscribed to in his name, and which he had created on or about Dec. 14, 2025.

Van Dyke, 38, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, is charged with three counts of violating the Commodity Exchange Act, each of which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison; one count of wire fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; and one count of an unlawful monetary transaction, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

This case is being handled by the Office's Securities and Commodities Fraud Task Force and National Security and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nicholas W. Chiuchiolo, Ryan B. Finkel, and Juliana N. Murray for the Southern District of New York are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Acting Deputy Chief Tanner Kroeger and Trial Attorney Eli Ross of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence & Export Control Section.

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