US married couple arrested for allegedly conspiring to launder $4.5bn in bitcoin

Cryptocurrency theft case 🡪 3.6bn in bitcoin stolen.

Recovered sum linked to Bitfinex 🡪 Systems breached by hackers 6 years ago.

Married couple arrested, both from New York on **Tuesday** 🡪 accused relying on various sophisticated techniques\* to steal it AND to conceal transactions: no tracking.

**CLEAR** Message to criminals: Cryptocurrency 🡪 not safe haven.  
Money can **ALWAYS** be followed – Regardless of form.

119 754 bitcoin stolen after hacker broke into Bitfinex 🡪 2000+ unauthorized transactions  
Value AT THE TIME: 71M USD, CURRENT value 4.5B USD.

Tried to conceal origins of money **OR** claimed money represented payments to Morgan’s (F company) startup.  
Proceeds spent on NFT’s AND gold AND mundane things (F.E. 500$ Walmart Gift card).

Morgan (F) published extensive catalogue rap song videos, DIY techniques + other lifestyle issues on social media 🡪 calling herself “Turkish Martha Stewart” OR “Waffle Queen of Korea”.

Morgan hinted 🡪 wanting to buy painting + apartment  
Sidelines in painting , recent pieces title: “**Tips to protect your business from Cybercriminals”** + featured interview with cryptocurrency exchange owner 🡪 how to prevent fraud.

Lichtenstein (M): lower profile online: described himself on Linkedin as “angel investor”, he is prestigious Y-combinator (company 🡪 helped launch array of prominent tech startups)

Prosecutors argued 🡪 defendants denied bail 🡪 calling them flight risks who still could have access to a lot of money. During search of their home: folder found labelled “passport ideas” 🡪 information how to fake IDs + stash burner phones.  
  
Defense attorney told judge clients had no intention of fleeing. Knew they were under investigation since last year.

Key clue in investigation: 2017 bust underground digital market used to launder portion of funds.  
Some of the money was transferred to AlphaBay (ebay but on the dark web).  
  
Bitfinex working with Department of Justice to establish rights to return stolen bitcoin.  
  
Tuesday’s criminal complaint: 4 months ago after Monaco announced launch New National Cryptocurrency Enforcement Team 🡪 compromises mix of anti-money laundering + cybersecurity experts.