



RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
QUEENS COUNTY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568
718-286-6000**

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CONTACT: KEVIN RYAN
NICOLE NAVAS
MERIS CAMPBELL
(718)286-6315

D.A. BROWN: BROOKLYN COUPLE CHARGED IN IDENTITY FRAUD SCHEME
*Allegedly Stole Identity of Rosedale Man to Take Out More than \$1 Million in Mortgage Loans,
Obtain Unauthorized Credit Cards and Purchase \$90,000 Mercedes Benz*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a married couple living in the Carnesie section of Brooklyn has been charged with stealing the personal identity of a 41-year-old Rosedale, Queens, man to fraudulently take out more than \$1 million in mortgage loans, obtain multiple credit cards in the victim's name, and apply for a loan for a \$90,000 Mercedes Benz using a forged driver's license, also in the victim's name.

District Attorney Brown said, "Identity theft is a financial plague afflicting millions of victims and costing billions of dollars in losses to consumers, business and financial institutions. In this particular case, the victim – who was a complete stranger to the defendants – had over the years established for himself and his family one of the best credit rating scores a person could possibly achieve. In just a matter of months, it is alleged, the defendants destroyed it, leaving his credit in shambles. It could take the victim months or even years to reestablish his good credit."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendants as Emerick Martin and his wife, Donna Martin, both 42 and residing at 1026 East 86th Street in Brooklyn. Each has been charged with second-degree attempted grand larceny, second-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument, first-degree identity theft, first-degree falsifying business records, first-degree scheme to defraud, and third-degree, unlawful possession of personal identification information. If convicted, each defendant faces up to seven years in prison.

The District Attorney said that the investigation began earlier this year when the Rosedale homeowner discovered that someone was attempting to obtain a \$180,000 second mortgage on his home and made a complaint to the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, which conducted an investigation that led to the defendants' arrest and the filing of criminal charges.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, the defendants took out two mortgages, totaling \$1,123,000, on a residence located at 266 Pine Acres Boulevard in Dix Hills, Long Island, using the name and social security number of the victim, David Clarke. Thereafter, on December 19, 2006, it is charged, the defendants, posing as David Clarke and Donna Clarke, and a third unapprehended individual, went to a Westbury, Long Island, mortgage broker and requested a second mortgage of \$180,000 on the real Mr. Clarke's Rosedale property. At the mortgage closing on January 11, 2007, the defendants allegedly presented a forged driver's license in the name of David Clarke and completed the paperwork by supplying the actual loan number, job information, telephone number and addresses of the real Mr. Clarke.

The District Attorney said that is further alleged that the two defendants went to a Jamaica, Queens, auto dealership on December 23, 2006, and asked to purchase a 2007 Mercedes Benz S550 for \$90,000 on credit in the name of David Clarke and requested that the vehicle's title be placed in Donna Martin's name. In filling out the loan application, it is alleged that the defendants provided the social security number of the real Mr. Clarke and a forged driver's license, also in the name of Mr. Clarke. The loan, however, was denied when the defendants could not produce a valid driver's license.

District Attorney Brown said that it is additionally alleged that the defendants had secured at least two credit cards – an American Express card and Bank of America card – in the name of David Clarke. In both cases, the defendants allegedly had the monthly statements mailed to the Dix Hill residence which they had purchased using David Clarke's name.

The defendants were arrested yesterday afternoon and are being held pending arraignment later today in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens.

The investigation, which is ongoing, is being conducted by Detectives Patrick F. Dolan and Evelyn Alegre, Sergeant John W. Kenna and Lieutenant Robert J. Burke, of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau, under the supervision of Lawrence J. Festa, Chief Investigator, and Albert D. Velardi, Deputy Chief Investigator.

Assistant District Attorney Michael S. Horn, of the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Gregory C. Pavlides, Bureau Chief, and Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.
