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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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D.A. BROWN: THREE INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH UNLICENSED DENTISTRY

Allegedly Capped Teeth and Filled Cavities; Face Up To Seven Years In Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced the arrest of three individuals – included a married couple – on charges of unlawfully posing as dentists and performing dental procedures on patients at two Queens locations.

District Attorney Brown said, “The defendants – none of whom are licensed by New York State to practice dentistry – are accused of preying upon unsuspecting individuals to selfishly enrich themselves. Their alleged conduct jeopardized the safety of patients looking for reasonable-priced dental care by allowing unlicensed or unqualified individuals to treat them.”

The District Attorney identified the three defendants as Luis Teran, 43, and his wife, Margarita Teran, 51, both of 35-24 93rd Street in Jackson Heights, and Fernando Utsman, 38, of 76-35 167th Street in Fresh Meadows. Each of the defendants is charged with first-degree reckless endangerment and unauthorized practice of a profession and face up to seven years in prison, if convicted.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Luis and Margarita Teran unlawfully practiced as dentists at a dental office set up at their 93rd Street address between December 19, 2007, and February 21, 2008, and offered their patients a number of procedures, including the fabricating, fitting and installation of bridges and filling of cavities.

In a second criminal complaint, it is alleged that Fernando Utsman provided invasive dental procedures between December 6, 2007, and February 21, 2008, to patients at TKM Lab, Inc., a dental office and laboratory located at 91-11 31st Avenue in East Elmhurst, even though he did not possess a license to practice dentistry in New York. Among the dental services Utsman allegedly performed – and for which he accepted payment – was fitting a patient for a cap and drilling out an old filling and replacing it with a new filling.

Yesterday, detectives assigned to the District Attorney’s NYPD Squad accompanied by investigators of the New York State Department of Education executed court-authorized search warrants drafted by the District Attorney’s Economic Crimes Bureau at the defendants’ work places.

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Among the items discovered at the two locations were dental chairs and instruments, sterilization equipment, x-ray film, dental molds and other dental equipment.

Utsman was arraigned today before Queens Criminal Court Judge William Harrington, who released the defendant on his own recognizance and ordered him to return to court on April 8, 2008. Luis and Margarita Teran are presently awaiting arraignment.

District Attorney Brown noted that the investigation is continuing and requested that others treated by the defendants contact his Economic Crimes Bureau at 718-286-6673.

The District Attorney expressed his appreciation to the New York State Department of Education's Office of Professional Discipline for their cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Joseph Richardson, Supervising Investigator with the New York State Department of Education's Office of Professional Discipline, under the supervision of Daniel J. Kelleher, Director of Investigations for the Office of Professional Discipline, and by Detective Ferdinand Caravousanos, of the District Attorney's NYPD Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Frank Horvath and Captain John M. Zanfardino.

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

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

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(Note to Editors: An e-version of this press release is posted on the QDA website at www.queensda.org)