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**CACHE OF GHOST GUNS SEIZED FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION;**  
**QUEENS COUPLE CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL POSSESSION AND SALE OF FIREARMS**

*Also Recovered in Raid: Gun-Making Equipment, Trigger Assembly Pieces, Magazine Clips and Ammo;  
Accused Couple Face Up to 20 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Lissette Espinal and Ricardi Kiem, both of Rosedale, Queens, have been charged with criminal possession of a weapon, criminal sale of a weapon and numerous other charges for allegedly having a stockpile of illegal weapons in their home. Defendant Kiem was allegedly assembling the untraceable “ghost” guns in their basement apartment shared with their child.

District Attorney Katz said, “Ghost guns are essentially homemade weapons that can be assembled by anyone without background checks or any other oversight. Those who seek to enrich themselves by selling these deadly firearms are literally lining their pockets with blood money. Take this warning seriously: we will continue to relentlessly go after back street gun dealers to keep our neighborhoods safe.”

Espinal, 32, and Kiem, 31, both of Hook Creek Boulevard in the Rosedale section of Queens, were arraigned this morning before Queens Criminal Court Judge Eugene Guarino. The defendants are charged in a 39-count criminal complaint charging them with criminal possession of a weapon in the second and third degree, criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree, attempted criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, endangering the welfare of a child, make/transport/dispose/deface weapons and dangerous instruments, firearms; unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition and prohibition on unfinished frames and receivers. Judge Guarino ordered the defendants to return to Court on November 3, 2021. Espinal and Kiem face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

As alleged, police were conducting an on-going investigation and requested a search warrant on October 12<sup>th</sup> for the home of defendant Kiem. Yesterday law enforcement executed the Court-authorized warrant on the Hook Creek home where both defendants were present, along with their 10-year-old daughter. Tools and contraband were also allegedly recovered from the defendants’ bedroom and there were also firearms and components of firearms found in the dresser drawer of the 10-year-old child’s bedroom.

According to the charges, police seized the following items from the basement level residence:

- 5 fully assembled 9mm pistols
- 1 fully assembled .22 caliber pistol

- All parts required to assemble 3 additional 9mm pistols, including 3 complete lower receiver and 3 upper receivers
- 2 polymer 80 AR-15 lower receivers and 1 serialized Anderson AM15 AR-15 lower receiver
- 1 additional complete lower receiver
- 1 additional complete upper receiver
- 4 large capacity magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition
- Approximately 650 rounds of ammunition of various calibers for use in pistols including 9mm and .22 caliber ammunition
- 19 magazines for 9mm pistols capable of holding 10 rounds of ammunition
- 1 magazine for 9mm pistol capable of holding 6 rounds of ammunition
- 3 magazines for .22 caliber pistols capable of holding 10 rounds of ammunition
- 1 pistol conversion kit which allows a pistol to be converted into a firearm with the characteristics of an assault weapon
- Several firearm-related components and parts for assembling and manufacturing pistols and assaults weapons
- Mail and other items with the name of defendant Kiem and the address of the residence

DA Katz said assembly and storage of the firearms were allegedly in plain view of the child in the home they all shared. The City's License and Permit database showed that defendant Kiem does not have a license to possess or own firearms in New York City and he is also not licensed to carry a firearm.

The investigation was conducted by Senior Investigator Jason Robles, and Investigator Breanna Knight of the DA's Detective Bureau, and by Assistant District Attorney Shanon LaCorte, Director of the District Attorney's Crime Strategies and Intelligence Unit.

Assistant District Attorney Ajay Chheda, a Section Chief in the DA's Violent Criminal Enterprises Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jonathan Sennett, Bureau Chief, Michelle Goldstein, Senior Deputy Chief, Mark Katz and Philip Anderson, Deputy Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

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