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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2020

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DISBARRED QUEENS ATTORNEY CHARGED WITH GRAND LARCENY
FOR STEALING SETTLEMENT CASH FROM CLIENT

*Defendant Allegedly Forged Client's Signature on Civil Lawsuit Settlement Check;
Faces Up to 4 Years in Prison If Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Yohan Choi, 44, has been charged with grand larceny, forgery and other crimes for allegedly bilking a client out of more than \$66,000 and fraudulently holding onto the settlement funds of a lawsuit for more than two years.

District Attorney Katz said, "The victim in this case had been injured in a car crash and turned to an attorney to help seek justice in a civil lawsuit. The defendant was entrusted to uphold the law. Instead he allegedly lied, manipulated and then enriched himself with funds intended for his client. This defendant is accused of violating his fiduciary duties to feed his own greed."

Choi, 44, who operated a practice on Northern Boulevard in Flushing, Queens, is charged with grand larceny in the fourth degree, forgery in the third degree, criminal possession of a forged instrument in the third degree and the practice of law by attorney who has been disbarred, suspended or convicted of a felony. If convicted the defendant faces up to 4 years in prison.

According to the charges, the victim had been injured in a car crash in March 2016 hired the defendant to represent him in a civil lawsuit against the other driver. In November 2017, the insurance company agreed to settle the suit for \$93,000. Choi, who by now had been disbarred for reasons unrelated to this case, allegedly deceived the victim into believing he could negotiate a larger settlement, forged his client's signature on the insurance company's check and deposited it into the law firm's account.

Continuing, it wasn't until December 2019 that the defendant allegedly told his client that the insurance company had settled and provided the victim with a fraudulent check for \$100,000. When the victim attempted to deposit his share of the settlement into his personal account, a stop payment order placed on the attorney's check prevented him from depositing it. When the man confronted the defendant about this, Choi allegedly stated that the insurance company had put the hold on the check and gave him a second check in January 2020. But that check, too, couldn't be cashed.

The DA said the victim confronted the lawyer a month later about not being able to cash the check. By this time, the victim had also discovered that Choi had been disbarred. In March 2020, the defendant paid the victim a total of \$100,000.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Thomas Kaup and Detective Veronica Perez, of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau, under the supervision of Chief Investigator Edwin Murphy. Also assisting in the investigation was Accountant Investigator Vivian Tunnicliff, under the supervision of Supervising Accountant Investigator Joseph Plonski.

Assistant District Attorney Daniel O'Leary, a supervisor in the District Attorney's Public Corruption Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys James Liander, Bureau Chief, Khadijah Muhammad-Starling, Deputy Bureau Chief, 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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Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

