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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**QUEENS COUPLE CHARGED WITH STEALING COVID RENTAL RELIEF FUNDS**

*Alleged Scammers Collected Payment Intended Only for Property Owners;  
Defendants Face Up to Seven Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Simon Holder and Shellon Gill, both of Jamaica, Queens, have been charged with grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property and other crimes. The pair, who are tenants, allegedly filed for and received Covid-19 Residential Rent Relief funds that are earmarked to help those negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. As specified in the Emergency Rental Relief Act of 2020 and signed into law on May 25, 2020, all rental assistance payments are to go directly to the property owners only.

District Attorney Katz said, “As alleged, these two defendants took advantage of a NYS Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) program that was created to keep people in their homes by paying their rent directly to property owners. Even after they were caught allegedly pocketing the money from the Covid-19 Residential Rent Relief Program, the tenants refused to return the funds and are now facing serious charges. We will not stand for this in Queens County.”

Holder, 38, was arraigned late Friday and defendant Gill, 32, was arraigned on Thursday night both before Queens Criminal Court Judge Johnson. Both defendants, who live on Tuskegee Airmen Way in the Jamaica, Queens, are charged in a criminal complaint grand larceny in the third degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the third degree, falsifying business records in the first degree and offering a false instrument for filing in the first degree. The two were ordered to return to Court on December 10, 2021. If convicted, Holder and Gill face up to seven years in prison.

According to the charges, around July 27, 2020, defendant Gill filled out and submitted an online application to have rent relief sent to the owner of the home she was renting. Gill allegedly falsely claimed she was the only person residing in the residence and directed the payment be sent to co-defendant Holder at an address in Brooklyn. The DCHR emailed a letter and other documents to be filled out by the presumed property owner, listed on the application as Simon Holder. The required paperwork was submitted to DHCR and a check was issued in the amount of \$3,480 with Holder as the payee.

DA Katz said a senior attorney with DCHR spoke to the actual owner of the Tuskegee Airmen Way property, who indicated that both Holder and Gill were his tenants. According to the complaint, they moved into

the rental unit in early 2019 and had not paid rent since mid-2019. The property owner secured an eviction order but the Covid Eviction Moratorium prevented him from removing the pair from the unit.

Defendant Gill was contacted by DCHR and told to either give the \$3,480 to the property owner or return the money to the state. The co-defendants allegedly did neither. Instead, defendant Holder called the actual landlord and allegedly threatened to shoot him for reporting the incident to authorities.

The investigation was conducted by Investigator Louis Mangas of the New York State Police, under the supervision of Senior Investigator MK Fagan, and under the overall supervision of Troop NYC Lieutenant Jason F. Delos-Santos and Captain Lucas M. Shuta.

Assistant District Attorney Myongjae M. Yi, a Section Chief in the District Attorney's Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys William Jorgenson, Bureau Chief, Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard A. Brave.

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

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