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COUPLE CHARGED WITH GRAND LARCENY
FOR STEALING MORE THAN \$500,000 FROM DEAF, BLIND AND BED-RIDDEN WOMAN

*Victim's 73-Year-Old Mother Conned into Sharing Guardianship
With Former Home Health Care Coordinator's Husband;
Defendants Face Up to 15 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Luz and Rosendo Tejeda, of Manhattan, have been charged with grand larceny and other crimes for allegedly swindling a disabled woman and her elderly mother out of more than \$500,000. The couple is accused of switching bank accounts to have the victim's monthly annuities deposited into their personal account between November 2016 through September 2020.

District Attorney Katz said, "The couple accused in this case allegedly took advantage of a disabled woman and her septuagenarian mother to line their own pockets. For years, they allegedly raked in thousands of dollars every month – money intended to pay for the specialized care the victim will require for the rest of her life. The defendants' alleged actions are beyond shameful, they are criminal."

Rosendo Tejeda, 63, of Lenox Avenue was arraigned Wednesday before Queens Criminal Court Judge Mary Bejarano on a complaint charging him with grand larceny in the second degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree and endangering the welfare of an incompetent person.

Luz Tejeda, 56, now of East 14th Street in Hazelton, PA., was arraigned late last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Bejarano on a complaint charging her with grand larceny in the second degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree, attempted grand larceny in the second degree, identity theft in the first degree, scheme to defraud in the first degree and endangering the welfare of an incompetent person. The defendants' return date is February 5, 2021. If convicted, they both face up to 15 years in prison.

District Attorney Katz said, defendant Luz Tejeda was hired to coordinate home care for the 43-year-old victim who was born deaf, blind, immobile and intellectually disabled. A lawsuit alleging medical malpractice was filed on behalf of the victim and when a settlement was reached the cash was disbursed via monthly annuity payments. Working in the family's Corona home, defendant Luz Tejeda developed a friendly relationship with the elderly mother. The senior – who does not speak or read English - trusted the worker and her husband and signed documents giving the Tejedas shared guardianship of her daughter.

Continuing, according to the charges, in the fall of 2016 the defendants allegedly reached out to the financial services company disbursing the monthly annuity and requested the deposits be diverted to their personal

bank account. In June 2019, the defendants also submitted a letter supposedly written by the incapacitated victim to change her physical address to their own Manhattan home.

In addition to the re-direction of annuity payments in excess of \$500,000 to their own personal accounts, according to the charges, defendant Luz Tejeda allegedly completed an application with Settlement Resources of New York, Ltd to borrow more than \$145,000 against the victim's future annuity payments and further received loan advances totaling \$9,400 that were deposited into the defendant's personal accounts.

This commencement of the criminal investigation stopped the disbursement of monies to the defendants in September 2020.

DA Katz said the elderly mother was under the impression the monthly deposits had stopped due to the financial institution filing bankruptcy. The scheme was discovered when a new, kind and compassionate health care attendant attending to the elderly mother realized the household was not receiving monies to support the mother and her incapacitated daughter and made a referral to the Queens County District Attorney's Elder Fraud Unit.

If anyone believes they are being victimized, please call the Elder Fraud Unit at (718) 286-6578.

The investigation was jointly conducted by the Elder Fraud Unit, Joseph Plonski, the QDA's Director of Forensic Accounting Unit and Investigator John Huerta, under the supervision of Senior Investigator M.K Fagan, and under the overall supervision of Acting Captain Lucas Shuta and Major Douglas Larkin of New York State Police, Troop NYC Queens Bureau of Criminal Investigations.

Assistant District Attorney Christine Burke, Section Chief of the District Attorney's Elder Fraud Unit within the Frauds Bureau, is prosecuting the case with the assistance of paralegal Daren Wilkes, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Joseph Conley, Bureau Chief, Herman Wun, Deputy Chief, and under the overall supervision 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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