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DISBARRED LAWYER SENTENCED TO PRISON
FOR SWINDLING DOZENS OF CLIENTS OUT OF MORE THAN \$1.8 MILLION

*Defendant Pleaded Guilty to Grand Larceny;
Approximately 50 Victims Scammed Out of Personal Injury Settlement Funds*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that former lawyer Yohan Choi, 47, has been sentenced to prison for bilking more than 50 clients – whom he represented before and after he was barred from practicing law – out nearly \$2 million in lawsuit settlement money.

District Attorney Katz said, “This defendant took an oath to uphold the law. Unfortunately, he let his own interest guide him instead of his fiduciary duty to represent his clients. This disbarred lawyer pocketed more than \$1.8 million that should have been distributed to the victims, who had already suffered and were due a settlement for a personal injury claim.”

Choi, of 23rd Avenue in Bayside, Queens, operated a law office on Northern Boulevard in Flushing, Queens. He pleaded guilty in January to grand larceny in the second degree before Queens Supreme Court Justice Eugene Guarino. Today, Justice Ianece sentenced the defendant to serve 1 ½ to 4 ½ years in prison. In addition, the defendant signed 28 confessions of judgment which requires him to repay in excess of \$1.8 million to make his victims whole.

According to the charges, the defendant held bank accounts for his law practice at several financial institutions, including Chase, Capitol One and HSBC. A forensic examination of these accounts showed dozens of deposits for lawsuit settlements on behalf of Choi’s clients.

DA Katz said, according to Court records, in November 2016 a woman the defendant represented in a personal injury lawsuit agreed to settle her case for \$52,500. The victim was entitled to just over \$35,000, however, she never received any money from the settlement money that was deposited into the law firm’s bank account.

Another female client of Choi’s settled her lawsuit in May of 2018 for \$75,000. After the lawyer’s fee and other expenses were deducted the victim should have received just over \$50,000. Choi never turned over that money, despite the insurance company depositing a check totaling \$75,000 into his account.

Continuing, the DA said, a man who also hired the defendant to represent him in a personal injury case agreed to settle for \$45,000 and was entitled to receive \$30,150. The investigation showed that Choi’s bank

account received a check from the insurance company for \$45,000 on May 12, 2020. Three days later, though, that same escrow account balance totaled just \$423. The victim never received the money he was due.

According to the charges, the defendant repeated this scheme at least 50 times over the course of five years. Clients due varying sums of money – from as little as \$1,000 to more than \$50,000 – were left empty-handed. In all these instances, the defendant’s business accounts show the checks were deposited – totaling more than \$1.8 million.

Choi’s license to practice law was suspended in November 2017.

Assistant District Attorney Khadijah Muhammad-Starling, Bureau Chief of the DA’s Public Corruption Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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