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**BROOKLYN MAN CHARGED IN SCHEME TO STEAL JAMAICA HOME
FROM ELDERLY WIDOW BY CLAIMING SHE DIED AND HE WAS HER SON**

*Defendant Allegedly Used Forged Death Certificates and Other Official Documents
to Claim He Was Sole Heir and Then Sold Home for Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars;
Faces Up to 15 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, along with New York City Sheriff Anthony Miranda and New York City Finance Commissioner Preston Niblick, announced today that Christopher Williams, 41, has been charged with grand larceny, falsifying business records, identity theft, scheme to defraud and other crimes. The defendant allegedly used forged paperwork to claim ownership of a Jamaica, Queens, house that he then sold for nearly \$300,000 cash.

District Attorney Katz said, “As alleged, the defendant scammed his way into ownership of property that was never legally his before selling the house for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Deed fraud is unfortunately on the rise throughout the borough and oftentimes, the rightful property owner is not aware that their home was taken away through fraudulent means. That is why the Housing & Worker Protection Bureau I created within the first year of taking office is dedicated to the investigation and prosecution of such crimes. No-one should suffer the loss of homeownership at the hands of fraudsters. The defendant has been charged accordingly and faces prison time if convicted.”

Sheriff Miranda said, “Deed Fraud continues to be a priority of the Sheriff’s Office and we will continue to conduct joint investigations with the Queens District Attorney’s Office and other prosecutors to arrest those individuals engaged in this criminal activity and restore ownership to the victims of these fraudulent schemes. The victim in this investigation is an elderly woman and all too often these investigations involve targeting our City’s most vulnerable communities and individuals.”

Finance Commissioner Niblack said, “The Department of Finance has taken several steps to increase awareness and to assist homeowners in identifying potential fraudulent filings on their real property. The success of this investigation is directly related to the implementation of the DOF notification program. The Office of the City Register notifies homeowners whenever a document is filed against their property. The City Register and the Office of the Sheriff work together in identifying potential fraudulent transactions and will continue to aggressively investigate these horrific crimes.”

Williams, of Glenmore Avenue in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Joseph Kasper on a complaint charging him with grand larceny in the second

degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree, forgery in the second degree, criminal possession of a forged instrument in the second degree, identity theft in the first degree, falsifying business records in the first degree, scheme to defraud in the first degree and offering a false instrument for filing in the second degree. Judge Kasper set the defendant's return date for July 28, 2022. Williams faces up to 15 years in prison, if convicted.

According to the charges, the victim and her sister inherited the home from their father, who passed away in 2011. Two years later one sister bought out the other and became the sole owner of the Dunlop Avenue home in Jamaica, Queens. The residence remained empty for several years with the victim planning renovations that became stalled due to the coronavirus health pandemic.

DA Katz said in August of 2021, the homeowner received a notification that a new deed, mortgage and other documents had been filed with the Office of The City Register regarding the ownership of the two-story dwelling. Investigators found that in early August 2021, deed-transfer documents were filed with the New York City Department of Finance, Office of the City Register transferring ownership of the home from the defendant, who was listed as the sole heir to the estate of the victim, to a buyer.

According to the complaint, the documents also show that the property was allegedly sold by Williams for \$270,000 on August 6, 2021. A deed transfer was submitted along with notification that a mortgage in the amount of \$360,000 had been acquired against the property by the new owner.

Continuing, said the DA, in order to sell the home, the defendant was required to submit several documents, including his birth certificate and the death certificates for the victim and her father, who was a retired police officer. All documents were provided and the closing proceeded. A review of the birth certificate listed the victim as the defendant's mother, even though her last name was misspelled. An allegedly forged death certificate for the victim included the property's address and a date of death as July 9, 2017.

This all occurred without the victim's knowledge or consent and while she was very much alive.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Veronica Marroquin, of the New York City Sheriff's Office, under the supervision of Detective Sergeant Michael Trano, Chief of Detectives Philip Schaffroth and First Deputy Sheriff Maureen Kokeas.

Assistant District Attorney Myongjae M. Yi, Section Chief of the DA'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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