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**LONG ISLAND MAN INDICTED FOR STEALING QUEENS VILLAGE HOME
FROM DECEASED BROTHER BY POSING AS HIS SOLE HEIR**

*Defendant and Deceased Brother Owned the Home as Tenants in Common;
Deceased Brother Left an Underage Daughter as Rightful Heir of His Share of Property;
Defendant Posed as the Sole Heir, Stole Full Ownership;
Faces Up to 15 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Wagner Recio, 51, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned in Supreme Court for allegedly filing fraudulent paperwork to claim full ownership of a Queens Village home that he co-owned with his brother, valued at over \$500,000. The brother's young daughter became the rightful heir to his share of the property upon his death in 2014.

District Attorney Katz said, "As alleged, this defendant used fraudulent records to assume full ownership of a Queens property, half of which rightfully belonged to his brother's daughter. The defendant is accused of unlawfully taking out a mortgage on the property of more than \$250,000, with an estimated \$97,000 received as a direct cash pay-out – all unbeknownst to his young niece or her guardian. The defendant has been indicted on numerous charges for these alleged acts of deed and mortgage theft and faces prison time if convicted."

Recio, 51, of Elmont, NY, was arraigned today before Queens Supreme Court Justice Judge Toni M. Cimino on an eight-count indictment charging him with grand larceny in the second degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree, residential mortgage fraud in the second degree, three counts of falsifying business records in the first degree and two counts of offering a false instrument for filing in the first degree. Justice Cimino ordered the defendant to return to Court on October 4, 2022. The accused faces up to 15 years in prison, if convicted.

According to the charges, the defendant and his brother, Alejandro Recio, owned the home located on 220th Street in Queens Village as Tenants in Common (TIC). In New York State, TIC signifies that each owner owns an undivided interest in the whole property, which means they can sell or otherwise transfer or borrow against their own interest in the property. If a tenant in common dies, the deceased person's interest passes to their heirs or to the person specified in the terms of the deceased person's will.

DA Katz said the defendant's brother passed away in 2014, leaving his biological 10-year-old daughter as the sole heir of his share of the property. At the time of his death, the child's mother obtained a court-order establishing her as the guardian of the minor for any property that her father owned. In January 2022, the mother uncovered that the defendant allegedly changed the deed from "Alejandro Recio and Wagner Recio" to "Wagner

Recio.” The victim’s mother then contacted the District Attorney’s Office, and a formal investigation was launched.

Subpoenaed records reveal that, on or about and between June 1, 2021 through July 13, 2021, the defendant allegedly worked with others to steal his niece’s 50 percent portion of the house. According to the charges, the defendant filed affidavits with the title and the mortgage companies claiming that he was the sole heir of his brother, Alejandro Recio. The defendant subsequently arranged for three other individuals to file separate affidavits in support of his fraudulent claim. Records show that on or about July 13, 2021, a closing took place wherein the defendant attended with a representative of Meadowbrook Mortgage and Equity title company, during which the deed to the property was changed to solely the name of the defendant. The falsified deed was filed with the NYC Register in Queens County shortly afterward.

Continuing, DA Katz said, in reliance on the fraudulent heirship documents, Meadowbrook Financial Brokers Inc. issued a mortgage to the defendant for \$261,000, of which approximately \$145,000 was used to pay off a previous mortgage on the house, and approximately \$97,000 was issued directly to the defendant as a cash payout.

This all occurred without the knowledge or consent of the deceased co-owner’s daughter, the rightful heir to the property, or her mother, who has served as her court-appointed guardian for the property since 2014.

The investigation was conducted by Assistant District Attorney Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, Ericka Loperena Hunter, paralegal, and Faye Johnson, financial analyst, of the District Attorney’s Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, with the assistance of Detective David Haynes, under the supervision of Sergeant Edwin Driscoll, under the overall supervision of Chief Investigator Thomas Conforti of the District Attorney’s Detectives Bureau. Detective Sergeant Michael Trano of the New York City Sheriff’s Office, under the overall supervision of New York City Sheriff Anthony Miranda, assisted in the investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Christina Hanophy is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys William Jorgenson, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney’s Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, 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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