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DEFENDANT CHARGED WITH POSSESSING AND PROMOTING
CHILD SEX ABUSE MATERIAL

*Illegal Activity Traced Through Cryptocurrency Transactions Made On The Dark Web;
Accused Faces Up to Seven Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, joined by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, announced today that Andre Hyman has been charged with promoting a sexual performance by a child and other crimes for allegedly purchasing, downloading, and possessing child sex abuse materials on his computer inside his Jamaica residence between May 2021 and November 2022.

District Attorney Katz said: “This case should serve as a warning to all those who think they can safely hide behind their digital wallets to purchase and promote materials depicting the sexual abuse of children. We will use all tools at our disposal, including tracing illegal activity through the digital marketplace, to investigate and prosecute these abhorrent actions. I’d like to thank District Attorney Bragg’s office for their diligence in launching the initial query into this case. Following a thorough investigation by my Major Economic Crimes Bureau, the defendant has been apprehended and faces justice in our courts.”

District Attorney Bragg said: “We are proud that the skills and blockchain expertise of our cryptocurrency analysts helped connect these horrific allegations to a suspect in Queens. Thank you to District Attorney Katz for her partnership and her ongoing work to protect the most vulnerable among us.”

Hyman, age 27, of 112th Avenue in Jamaica, Queens, was arraigned yesterday before Queens Criminal Court Judge Anthony M. Battisti on a nine-count complaint charging him with promoting a sexual performance by a child, forgery in the second degree, five counts of criminal possession of a forged instrument in the second degree, possessing a sexual performance by a child. Judge Battisti set the defendant’s return date for January 12, 2023. If convicted, the defendant faces up to seven years in prison.

According to the charges, the defendant’s activities were initially discovered as part of a larger, international investigation into the proliferation of online child sexual abuse materials. Local law enforcement partners at the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office’s Cybercrime and Identity Theft Bureau were alerted to several websites selling child sexual abuse material using Bitcoin addresses. One website in particular advertised access to criminal content in exchange for payment via cryptocurrency.

DA Katz said that through the course of the investigation, investigators tracked the movement of funds from the website to determine the buyers of the illicit images and videos, pointing them to transactions made via Square, Inc., a mobile payment company. Subpoenaed records from Square, Inc. indicated the defendant’s name and address as the buyer of sexually explicit materials involving prepubescent girls.

Prosecutors from the Queens DA's Major Economic Crimes Bureau launched a further investigation into the defendant's bank accounts, enhancing the case and securing a search warrant for the defendant's residence.

The search, conducted by members of the Queens DA Detective Bureau, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Department of Labor- Office of the Inspector General, resulted in the recovery of numerous images and videos of child sex abuse material, including an image of an approximately four-year-old girl being subjected to a sexual act. The search further resulted in the recovery of five fraudulent checks and blank check stock paper.

The defendant was arrested at the time of the home search, on Thursday, November 3rd. He allegedly confessed to intentionally accessing sites offering child sexual abuse materials and attempting to manufacture fraudulent checks for business purposes.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Investigator Linda Den Dekker of the Queens DA's Detective Bureau under the overall supervision of Chief of Detectives Thomas Conforti.

Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Speck, Supervisor of the Cyber Crimes Unit within the DA's Major Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Chief and Cryptocurrency Investigations Coordinator, Assistant District Attorney Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of 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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