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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UNCLE ORDERED TO PAY RESTITUTION FOR STEALING SHARE OF FAMILY HOME
WILLED TO NIECE

Defendant Filed Fraudulent Deed on Jointly-Owned Property After Brother's Death

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Wagner Recio was sentenced today for filing fraudulent paperwork to claim he fully owned a Queens Village home when his niece had actually inherited half of it from her father, Recio's brother. In 2021, Recio obtained a mortgage against the value of the property and kept the financial proceeds for himself.

District Attorney Katz said: "This defendant falsified documents to steal interest in a home that was not rightfully his but was, in fact, his niece's. After an in-depth investigation by my office's Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, we were able to bring charges against the defendant and now have made sure that the victim has received what was rightfully hers all along."

Recio, 52, of Butler Boulevard in Elmont, pleaded guilty in December 2022 to offering a false instrument for filing in the first and second degrees. As part of the plea agreement, the defendant agreed to nullify the deed. The house was then sold and the proceeds were paid to his niece as restitution. Queens Supreme Court Justice Judge Toni M. Cimino sentenced Recio today to a conditional discharge.

According to the charges:

- Recio and his brother, Alejandro Recio, jointly owned a house on 220th Street in Queens Village as Tenants in Common (TIC) allowing each owner undivided interest to sell, transfer or borrow against their own share in the property.
- When Alejandro Recio died in 2014, his 10-year-old daughter became the sole heir of her father's share of the property, according to her father's will. The child's mother was designated by the court to act on her behalf.
- Between June 1 and July 13, 2021, Recio filed affidavits with the Equity title and Meadowbrook mortgage companies claiming that he was the sole heir to his brother's interest in the home. He also arranged for three other individuals to file separate affidavits attesting to his fraudulent claim.
- Recio filed a closing and revised property deed naming himself the sole owner. The falsified deed was filed with the New York City Register in Queens shortly afterward.

- Meadowbrook Financial Brokers Inc. issued a mortgage to Recio for \$261,000. 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.
- In January 2022, Recio's mother discovered the changed deed and contacted the District Attorney's Office.

Assistant District Attorney Christina Hanophy, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney William Jorgenson, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard A. Brave.

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