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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**ALLEGED SQUATTER INDICTED FOR ILLEGALLY OCCUPYING JAMAICA HOME,  
PROVIDING FORGED DOCUMENTS TO AUTHORITIES INCLUDING CIVIL COURT**

*Accused of Trespassing onto Vacant Property and Changing Locks  
Faces up to 15 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Lance White-Hunt was arraigned on an indictment charging him with burglary, identity theft, attempted grand larceny and other crimes for illegally occupying a home in Jamaica and forging leasing documents in an effort to stake his claim as a legal tenant. The defendant went as far as filing a suit against the rightful owner and her broker in civil court.

District Attorney Katz said: “You cannot claim rights to a home that you have entered illegally. My office will not allow individuals to capitalize on the confusion surrounding squatters’ rights for their own personal gain. We will bring criminal charges and secure indictments not only for the unlawful occupancy, but also for any forged documents used in the commission of the crime. The law does not permit illegal residency and we will continue to prosecute such cases in Queens.”

White-Hunt, 24, of 18<sup>th</sup> Street in Brooklyn, was arraigned today on an 18-count indictment charging him with burglary in the second degree; two counts of criminal possession of a forged instrument in the second degree; five counts of identity theft in the first degree; attempted grand larceny in the third degree; attempted criminal possession of stolen property in the third degree; offering a false instrument for filing in the first degree; tampering with physical evidence; three counts of criminal mischief in the fourth degree; petit larceny; and two counts of criminal possession of a forged instrument in the third degree.

He faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted. Supreme Court Justice Toni Cimino ordered him to return to court on June 11.

According to the charges:

- On or about February 23, 2024, the owner of a home on Lakewood Avenue listed it for rent through a broker at Top Nest Properties. The woman has owned the property since January 2020 through an LLC.
- For several weeks, the broker visited the location multiple times a week and observed the entire house to be vacant, all of the windows closed and undamaged, and the two front doors locked. She also had a functioning key for the two front doors.

- On March 1, 2024, the broker made a regularly scheduled stop at the property and observed that the locks had been changed on the front door leading to the studio unit of the residence and her key no longer worked.
- On March 4, 2024, the broker arrived at the residence and observed that the locks had been changed on the front door leading to the upstairs unit. She also observed White-Hunt inside the residence.
- The police were called and White-Hunt said he had been staying at the location since January. He provided a purported lease with the broker and Top Nest Properties listed as the landlords.
- The broker reviewed the lease and determined that she had never seen the document and that her signature on it was forged. The broker's statements were corroborated by the owner of Top Nest Properties.
- On March 5, 2024, the police arrived at the location again and White-Hunt provided a bill from National Grid and AT&T as purported proof of residence. Both companies later confirmed that the provided account numbers did not exist in their official records.
- On March 14, 2024, White-Hunt filed a lawsuit against the homeowner's LLC, the broker, and Top Next Properties for an illegal lockout. As part of the civil suit, White-Hunt filed a residential lease that was determined to have been forged and was a different lease than that provided by the defendant to officers on scene on March 4, 2024. The civil lawsuit was later discontinued with prejudice.
- Following an investigation into the matter by the District Attorney's office, White-Hunt was arrested on May 13 at his place of residence by members of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau.

The investigation was conducted with the assistance of NYPD Sergeant Benjamin Aboagye of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct.

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

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*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

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