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X@QueensDAKatz

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568

718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

JOHN DOE DEFENDANT SENTENCED FOR STEALING THREE QUEENS COUNTY HOMES

Defendant Also Pleaded Guilty to Charges Related to Identity Theft Scheme; Defendant Used at Least Six Known Aliases and Actual Identity Remains Unknown; Sentenced to 4 ½ years to 9 years in prison

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that a John Doe defendant – who has used multiple aliases – was sentenced to 4 ½ years to nine years in prison for stealing three homes in Queens. The defendant was arrested in March under the name of Carl Avinger for his role in an ongoing deed fraud scheme. News of the case, which generated media coverage, reached the real Carl Avinger in Tennessee and the identity theft victim came forward to the Queens District Attorney's Office. The defendant was subsequently charged and pleaded guilty to identity theft and was sentenced last month to 3 ½ years to seven years for that matter. Three co-defendants have also pleaded guilty for their roles in the deed theft scheme.

District Attorney Katz said: "Justice should not be avoided by taking other people's identities. In fact, taking someone's identity for certain benefits is itself a crime. We did not give up investigating until we were able to provide justice to the actual Carl Avinger in addition to holding the man using his identity accountable for the crimes he committed. The defendant assumed the identity of numerous people to enrich his life by conducting various schemes. After we announced our indictment of 'Carl Avinger' earlier this year, news reports reached the actual Carl Avinger. My office was contacted by Avinger family members, and we immediately launched an investigation into this defendant's identity. I thank my Housing and Worker Protection Bureau for their painstaking investigation into this case, unraveling of the deed fraud scheme and holding the wrongdoers accountable."

Doe, whose pedigree information is unverified, pleaded guilty in August to identity theft in the first degree. Queens Supreme Court Justice Jerry Iannece sentenced him on October 1 to 3½ years to seven years in prison. He also pleaded guilty on October 8 before Supreme Court Justice Leigh Cheng to grand larceny in the first degree and two counts of grand larceny in the second degree in connection with the deed fraud scheme. He was sentenced today to 4 ½ year to nine years in prison on the first-degree count and to four to eight years on the second-degree counts, all to run concurrently with the sentence imposed on October 1.

One of Doe's codefendants in the deed fraud scheme, Torey Guice, pleaded guilty on October 7 to falsifying business records in the second degree and was sentenced by Judge Cheng to a one-year conditional discharge and must consent to void the fraudulent deed for which he was charged.

Codefendant, Autumn Valeri, pleaded guilty on October 8 to three counts of grand larceny in the second degree. Valeri was sentenced on November 5 by Judge Cheng to five years of probation and must surrender her real estate license and consent to the deeds of the stolen property being voided.

Codefendant Lawrence Ray pleaded guilty on October 16 to scheme to defraud in the first degree with a recommended sentence on November 20 of five years of probation and forfeiture of $403,829.22. He must also consent to the deeds of the stolen property being voided.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the charges, defendant Doe was arrested and indicted earlier this year in a deed fraud scheme. He was accused of working with Guice, Valeri and Ray and three companies to steal three homes from their rightful owners in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens Village and Jamaica Estates. At the time of his arrest, the defendant submitted identification, which also contained his photograph, identifying him as Carl Avinger, with the "real" Carl Avinger's date of birth.

An investigation revealed that on November 13, 2024, the defendant submitted an application to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles to renew his driver's license. The application, which was signed by “Carl Avinger,” contained an updated address on 205th Street in St. Albans. The license was later issued and mailed to that address.

The defendant’s identity theft came to light after news coverage of the deed fraud scheme was reported and seen by the complainant, Carl Edward Avinger. Avinger, who currently resides in Tennessee, reported to authorities that the defendant, who he knew as “Ace,” resided with him in 2003 in North Carolina. During that time, Avinger’s identification card and Social Security card went missing. Avinger’s sister also identified the defendant as “Ace”.

Further investigation revealed that the defendant had been arrested 12 times between May 22, 1993, and March 18, 2025, resulting in three felony convictions and six misdemeanor convictions in New York state. The defendant used numerous aliases and dates of birth for each arrest including John Stamp, Bobby Jackson, Craig Taylor, Carl E. Avinger, Anthony S. Williams, Kevin C. Windley and Corey Blake Duncan.

At the time of Doe’s and Valeri’s pleas, Judge Cheng signed an order to void the fraudulent deed on one of the three properties. The two other properties had already been transferred to third parties. The DA’s office will utilize New York State Criminal Procedure Law 420.45 to void those fraudulent deeds after the defendants’ sentencing. This will be the sixth time the DA’s office, which was the first to employ this statute in 2023, has used it to have the court declare void fraudulent deeds post-conviction.

The investigation was conducted by Assistant District Attorney Rachel Stein, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, with assistance from Detective Thomas Kaup of the District Attorney’s Detective Bureau under the supervision of Sergeant Richard Lewis and Chief Investigator Robert LaPollo. The DA also thanks Detective Marcello Razzo of NYPD Financial Crimes Task Force, Special Agent Scott Straface of the U.S. Department of State, and Special Agent Nermin Radoncic of the Office of the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration for their assistance in this investigation.

ADA Stein is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys William Jorgenson, Bureau Chief, and Christina Hanophy, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Investigations Division Gerard Brave.

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