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D.A. BROWN: MANHATTAN WOMAN CHARGED
IN INTERNET DOG SALE SCAM

Customers Allegedly Paid Up To \$400 For English Bulldogs That Were Never Delivered

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Manhattan woman who advertised the sale of English bulldog puppies over the Internet has been charged with taking hundreds of dollars in payments from four buyers and then not delivering the animals. The bulk of the money was then allegedly wired to an accomplice in Nigeria.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant is charged with preying upon dog lovers by advertising puppies for sale at little cost. The alleged ads simply stated: looking for loving homes for puppies, pay just the shipping costs. In fact, the ads were allegedly part of an international Internet scam intended to rip people off. Indeed, it is doubtful that the puppies even existed. I urge all online consumers to be wary. Internet fraud is a serious and growing problem. Shoppers should first check out an advertiser's track record with consumer protection agencies."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Janet Goris, 33, of 45 Stanton Street in lower Manhattan. Goris, who works as an executive assistant, was arraigned on April 27, 2007, before Queens Criminal Court Judge Joseph A. Zayas on a criminal complaint charging her with fourth-degree grand larceny, fifth-degree conspiracy, petit larceny and second-degree scheme to defraud. Goris, who faces up to four years in prison if convicted, was released without bail and ordered to return to court on May 22, 2007.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, the defendant advertised on various websites, including Yahoo Classifieds and livedeal.com, that she was selling English bulldogs. Between December 21, 2006, and February 28, 2007, four prospective dog buyers wired her payments ranging in amounts from \$300 to \$400 which the defendant allegedly picked up at a Howard News/ Western Union office located at 97-15 Queens Boulevard in East Elmhurst. The defendant allegedly then failed to ship the dogs to their new owners as promised. At the time of her arrest, the defendant allegedly admitted that she kept 10 percent of the proceeds for herself and wired the balance to an accomplice in Nigeria who remains unapprehended.

District Attorney Brown said the investigation is ongoing and urged additional victims of the alleged scheme to contact his Economic Crimes Bureau at 718-286-6673.

According to the District Attorney, the investigation began in December 2006 when the New York City Police Department's Identity Theft Unit received complaints about an online dog sale scheme. The complaints were referred to the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau for further investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Armando Coutinho of the NYPD's Identity Theft Unit under the supervision of Sergeant Robert Delaney and the overall supervision of Captain Gregory Antonsen, Commanding Officer. Senior Assistant District Attorney Neil F. Gitin and former Assistant District Attorney Jason P. Garelick, of the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, also assisted in the investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Allison P. Wright, of the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Gregory C. Pavlides, Bureau Chief, and Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.