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FIVE INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

*Four Local Business Owners Under Reported Income Or Falsified Insurance;
One Worker Falsely Obtained Benefits*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by New York State Insurance Fund (NYSIF) Executive Director James J. Wrynn, today announced that five individuals have been charged in various schemes with committing workers' compensation fraud in an amount totaling approximately \$164,000.

District Attorney Brown said, "One of the defendants is accused of stealing tens of thousands of dollars in workers' compensation benefits that he was not entitled to receive. In another case, a defendant working as a plumbing subcontractor is alleged to have cheated the system by presenting forged workers' compensation insurance certificates to prospective clients, thereby potentially undercutting the bids of honest contractors and, at the same time, failing to provide insurance coverage for workers in the event of an injury. The other defendants are alleged to have shortchanged the NYSIF by under reporting their earnings and paying substantially lower premiums. These are serious crimes that undermine the system for workers who are truly deserving of workers' compensation and for contractors who pay their fair share. My office will continue to aggressively prosecute individuals who abuse the system for their own benefits."

NYSIF Executive Director James J. Wrynn said, "Workers' compensation fraud is a felony that not only escalates the cost of insurance, it directly impacts the consuming public and impedes recovery of the state's economy. As the state's leading workers' compensation insurance provider, NYSIF adopts an aggressive attack on fraud as its responsibility, one in which we're grateful to have allies such as Queens District Attorney Richard Brown, the New York State Insurance Department and the state Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General. In cooperation with these and other authorities, NYSIF has stopped over \$166 million in fraud committed by policy holders, claimants and medical providers in more than a decade. New York State is tough on insurance fraud because insurance fraud is a serious crime that robs everyone – hardworking men and women, families and legitimate businesses – trying to make an honest living.

The defendants have been variously charged with second- and third-degree grand larceny, second- and third-degree insurance fraud, first-degree falsifying business records, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing and violation of sections 114(1) and 96(1) of the Workers' Compensation law.

Among those arrested was Jun Hang Wang, the owner of Xin Jian Construction Corporation, who allegedly under reported his earnings to the NYSIF and paid premiums for workers' compensation based on that. It is alleged that Wang's company earned substantially more and now owes the fund approximately \$54,000 in unpaid premiums.

Another defendant, Gaspare Galante, of Howard Beach, is alleged to have received benefits for an injury suffered while working as an exterminator for Rudy's Exterminating Company, Inc., in July 2003. He allegedly received benefits totaling more than \$28,000 between 2005 and 2009 to which he was not entitled because he failed to notify the NYSIF that he was allegedly working for USA Exterminators, located in Brooklyn, while collecting benefits.

In another case, defendant Daniel Weintraub, of Roslyn, N.Y., the owner of The Plumbing Company in Little Neck, allegedly repeatedly worked as a subcontractor after showing contractors a forged insurance policy indicating he carried workers' compensation insurance while he allegedly did not.

(MORE)

The defendants were arraigned Wednesday and Thursday in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens.

The arrests were made by NYPD Detectives Ferdinand Caravousanos and Albert Ramos of the District Attorney's NYPD Squad under the direct supervision of Sergeant Francis Teran and the overall supervision of Captain John M. Zanfardino. The investigations were conducted by State Insurance Department Frauds Investigators Dennis Carmody, George Cappaccio, Frank Hunt, NYSIF Investigators Dominick Raspante and Ray Mayberry, and AIG Senior Investigator Kristin Romani.

Assistant District Attorney Rosemary Buccheri, of the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of 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 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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ADDENDUM

JUN HANG WANG, 41, of 121-15 6th Avenue, in Queens, has been charged with second-degree grand larceny, second-degree insurance fraud, first-degree falsifying business records and violating section 114(1) of the Workers' Compensation law. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 15 years in prison.

DANIEL WEINTRAUB, 62, of 300 Edward Street in Roslyn, N.Y. has been charged with third-degree grand larceny, first-degree falsifying business records, second-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument and violating section 114(1) of the Workers' Compensation law. If convicted, the defendant faces up to seven years in prison.

GASPARE GALANTE, 43, of 97-08 156th Avenue, in Queens, has been charged with third-degree grand larceny, third-degree insurance fraud, first-degree falsifying business records, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing and violating sections 114(1) and 96(1) of the Workers' Compensation law. If convicted, the defendant faces up to seven years in prison.

ELVIO RODRIGUEZ, 40, of 119-38 8th Avenue in Queens, has been charged with third-degree grand larceny, first-degree falsifying business records, third-degree insurance fraud and violating sections 114(1) and 96(1) of the Workers' Compensation law. If convicted, the defendant faces up to seven years in prison.

VASILIS CHARALAMOUS, 49, of 26 Youkum Avenue, in Farmingdale, N.Y., has been charged with second-degree grand larceny, second-degree insurance fraud, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing, first-degree falsifying business records and violating section 96(1) of the Workers' Compensation law. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 15 years in prison.

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