



**RICHARD A. BROWN**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
QUEENS COUNTY**  
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568  
718-286-6000

Release # 15-2010  
[www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2010

**CONTACT:** KEVIN RYAN  
HELEN PETERSON  
MERIS CAMPBELL  
718-286-6315

**LONG ISLAND CONTRACTOR CHARGED WITH STEALING \$140,000**  
**FROM 74-YEAR-OLD ST. ALBANS WOMAN**

*Money Was To Pay For Renovation On Home; Work Allegedly Never Started*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a Long Island contractor has been charged with bilking a 74-year-old Queens homeowner out of more than \$140,000 that she paid him over two years ago for an extension to her residence that he never started.

District Attorney Brown said, "The victim in this case, it is alleged, hired the defendant over two years ago and paid him a considerable amount of money to build an extension to her house because of her inability to climb the stairs to access the restroom. In all that time, it is alleged that he never even so much as hammered a nail. As a result, the victim seriously hurt her shoulders, back and legs a few months ago when she fell down the stairs while attempting to use the upstairs bathroom."

District Attorney Brown added, "In this market when more and more people are doing renovations and repairs on their residences instead of moving, consumers should be cautious when hiring a home improvement contractor. Defective or incomplete home improvement repairs are among the top consumer complaints my office receives. To avoid being a victim of a home repair scheme, consumers should request and check a contractor's references. Any contract payments given to a contractor should be put into an escrow account in a bank. Consumers should also avoid paying for a remodeling job up-front."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Ron Scott, 68, of 58 Udalia Avenue in West Islip, Long Island. Scott, who is a representative of Phoenix International Construction Company and the owner of US Builder NYC, both located at 510 Sunrise Highway in West Babylon, New York, is presently awaiting arraignment in Queens Criminal Court on a three-count criminal complaint charging him with second-degree grand larceny, second-degree criminal possession of stolen property and a violation of New York State Lien Law 79-A (misappropriation of funds of trust). If convicted, he faces up to 15 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal charges, 74-year-old Lilian Miller retained Scott to build an extension to her house located at 191-34 112<sup>th</sup> Street in the St. Albans section of Queens on August 4, 2007. At the request of Scott, it is alleged that Ms. Miller gave him that day a bank check in the amount of \$138,500 (from a line of credit she obtained against

(MORE)

the equity in her home) and a personal check totaling \$5,000. Shortly thereafter the bank check was allegedly deposited in a non-escrow Capitol One Bank account maintained by US Builder NYC. It is alleged that Scott used the funds from the Capitol One account to draft a check in the amount of \$43,050 to Linda Giarizzo for monies he owed to her deceased husband in an unrelated matter and a second check in the amount of \$94,000 to Phoenix International.

It is further alleged that Scott failed to return or perform any work on Ms. Miller's residence and that despite numerous attempts by Ms. Miller to contact him via mail, telephone calls and e-mails to recover her funds, she was unsuccessful.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Richard A. Lewis, of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau, under the supervision of Lieutenant Robert Burke and Sergeant John Kenna, and under the overall supervision of Lawrence J. Festa, Chief Investigator, and Albert D. Velardi, Deputy Chief Investigator, along with Supervising Accountant Investigator James J. Dever and Financial Analyst Larry L. Schwartz, of the District Attorney's Economic and Environmental Crimes Bureau.

Assistant District Attorney Nathalie Bell, of the District Attorney's Economic and Environmental Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys 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 complaint is merely an accusation and that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

#

**Note to Editor: An e-version of this press release is posted on QDA website at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)**

---