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— PRESS RELEASE —

## COOKING THE LANDLORD'S BOOKS

*Bookkeeper Accused of Looting More Than \$650K from  
3<sup>rd</sup>-Generation Bronx Business*



Brij-Raj (Department of Corrections)

(Bronx, NY – January 20, 2015) – Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson today announced the Grand Jury indictment of former bookkeeper **CHETANDEO “RAY” BRIJ-RAJ** of Yonkers, NY, on charges of **Grand Larceny in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree (C-Felony, 1 count)**, **Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree (C-Felony, 1 count)**, and **Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree (D-Felony, 75 counts)** for embezzling more than \$650,000 from one of the Bronx’s oldest, family-run businesses, Schmidt Realty.

The 45-year-old BRIJ-RAJ, who was responsible for overseeing the rents and expenses for the residential and commercial properties owned and managed by Schmidt, is accused of instead writing hundreds of checks to himself between 2006 and 2011, forging the company president’s signature on them. He then altered the books in an attempt to cover his tracks.

The third-generation owner, grandson of the man who founded Schmidt Realty, was forced to sell more than half of his company’s properties as well as mortgage his own house, in order to keep the 114-year-old business afloat.

After BRIJ-RAJ was dismissed from his job at Schmidt, he took a job as a rental agent for an unrelated company, JJA Holding, which is now the focus of a federal Fair Housing Justice Center lawsuit. In that position, the defendant was recorded by a hidden camera (aired on WNBC-TV in May, 2014), shown turning away prospective black tenants at JJA’s properties in the Bronx. <http://bit.ly/1yb3Xoo>

7/2015



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The case against CHETANDEO "RAY" BRIJ-RAJ is being prosecuted by the Bronx D.A. Investigations Division with the assistance of Detective Investigator Peter Moro and Principal Financial Investigator Lorraine Ciechanowicz. The A.D.A. is Senior Trial Assistant D.A. Jeffrey Glucksman of the Arson/Auto/Economic Crime Bureau.

If convicted of the charges, BRIJ-RAJ faces up to 15 years behind bars.

CHETANDEO BRIJ-RAJ is free on \$150,000 cash bail; his next appearance is set for March 31, 2015 in Part 60 in front of Justice Steven Barrett.

The charges contained in the indictment are allegations; the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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