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## ***Attorney General James and Bronx District Attorney Clark Announce Arrests of Real Estate Scammers for Deed Theft and Fake Investment Schemes***

**Marcia Campbell Stole over \$250,000 and a Family Home from Vulnerable New Yorkers with Help from Her Husband and an Associate**

**New Deed Theft Law Co-Authored by AG James Used to Help Return Stolen Home**

**October 2, 2024**

NEW YORK – New York Attorney General Letitia James and Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark today announced the arrests and indictments of three individuals and their company for their roles in a deed theft scheme to steal the childhood home of a Bronx resident and a series of real estate investment scams that stole over \$250,000 from vulnerable New Yorkers. Marcia Campbell, a Bronx real estate broker who operated Extreme Realty, her husband Fred Campbell, their associate Frank Palmer, and their shell company, 99 Patmor Ave Inc., were [each charged with five crimes for their roles in the deed theft of a house in the Bronx](#). Marcia Campbell was [separately charged with 13 additional crimes for her real estate investment scams](#) that targeted first-time home buyers, immigrants, and a personal friend. In total, Mrs. Campbell allegedly stole more than \$250,000 and obtained a nearly \$500,000 mortgage on the home she stole.

Using a new deed theft law co-authored by Attorney General James, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) successfully obtained a stay of the foreclosure on the home stolen by the Campbells and Frank Palmer. This will prevent the home from being sold during the prosecution, strengthening our ability to return the home to its rightful owner at the conclusion of the case.

“Stealing someone’s home and tricking a retired friend into a fake loan to steal their money is about as heartless as it gets,” said **Attorney General James**. “Marcia Campbell allegedly stole the family home and hundreds of thousands of dollars from clients who trusted her, including an immigrant family, a vulnerable homeowner, and even her own friend. Her frauds robbed hardworking people of their savings and even left one family homeless. I thank District Attorney Clark for her hard work and collaboration on this case to fight deed theft and bring these individuals to justice.”

“The defendants allegedly stole a house and more than \$250,000 from vulnerable people in heartless, greedy schemes,” said **Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark**. “I am pleased that my Office’s Financial Frauds Bureau worked closely with New York Attorney General James’ office to bring justice for these victims. For many, a house is their most precious asset, and we will not tolerate anyone exploiting someone’s home for unlawful profit.”

### **Real Estate Investment Scams**

The joint investigation between OAG and the Office of the Bronx District Attorney (Bronx DA) revealed that Mrs. Campbell executed three separate real estate investment scams in which she tricked clients into sending her



money for sham real estate transactions, only to keep the money for herself and refuse to return the vast majority of the funds.

- An immigrant couple approached Mrs. Campbell for help purchasing their first home. After finding a home in the Bronx they wanted to make an offer on, Mrs. Campbell told them they needed to pay a \$1,000 “processing fee” and a downpayment of \$32,000 to her business. Over the next five years, from May 2018 to August 2023, Mrs. Campbell continued to charge them tens of thousands of dollars in additional fees, totaling over \$91,000. When the couple realized the home they wanted was not for sale, they requested their money back, but Mrs. Campbell only returned \$17,000.
- In June 2023, Mrs. Campbell approached a friend, a retired home health aide, with a fraudulent investment opportunity. Mrs. Campbell asked for a short-term loan of \$130,000, offering to pay it back with an additional \$30,000 as compensation that she fraudulently claimed she would be receiving shortly from another real estate transaction. For weeks after she made the loan, Mrs. Campbell’s friend followed up with her for the money, but Mrs. Campbell only offered excuses and never paid back the \$130,000 sham loan.
- In May 2023, an immigrant mother with two young children with disabilities approached Mrs. Campbell seeking assistance with buying her first home. Mrs. Campbell convinced the victim that she would not qualify for a large enough loan to buy a house. Instead, Mrs. Campbell fraudulently convinced the victim to join in an investment opportunity in which she would send Mrs. Campbell \$65,000 to fund the purchase of a multi-unit property in the Bronx that she could both live in and rent out. Mrs. Campbell convinced the victim she would be the sole owner of the property, and emphasized that she had to act fast to secure it. When her client sent the funds, Mrs. Campbell refused to provide the address for the supposed property and instead pocketed the money. When the victim repeatedly followed up requesting her money back, Mrs. Campbell refused to return all but \$15,000.

### **Deed Theft**

A second, separate OAG investigation revealed that in 2019 Mrs. Campbell, her husband Fred Campbell, and Frank Palmer stole the lifelong home of a woman located at 4169 Bronxwood Avenue in the Bronx. Mrs. Campbell was approached to help the woman transfer ownership of the home to her sister. In reality, the Campbells and Mr. Palmer took advantage of the two women’s inexperience with real estate and vulnerable financial circumstances to steal the property for themselves.

After gaining the trust of the homeowner, Mrs. Campbell, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Palmer used fraudulent contracts with the homeowner’s forged signature to transfer ownership of the property to a shell company they controlled, 99 Patmor Ave Inc., allowing them to take out a mortgage of \$493,500 on the property. They staged a closing for the homeowner and her sister, but never asked them to sign any documents. When confronted the next day, Mrs. Campbell claimed they had to transfer the property to Mr. Palmer, who would soon transfer it to the



homeowner's sister, though this never happened. Since obtaining the mortgage, the Campbells and Mr. Palmer have defaulted on the loan and the lender has filed for foreclosure. In the fall of 2021, the locks were changed on the home and the victim's family was left unhoused.

As a result of a [new law meant to protect victims of deed theft](#) in New York co-authored by Attorney General James and sponsored by State Senator Zellnor Myrie and Assemblymember Landon C. Dais, in May 2024 OAG successfully obtained a stay of the foreclosure that resulted from Mrs. Campbell and her associates defaulting on their loan. This allows the prosecution to proceed without the house getting sold to an unsuspecting buyer, with the ultimate goal of returning the property to the rightful owner at the completion of the criminal case.

For their roles in the deed theft, Marcia Campbell, Fred Campbell, Frank Palmer, and 99 Patmor Ave Inc. were arraigned today before Judge Brenda Rivera. Mrs. Campbell, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Palmer, and 99 Patmor Ave Inc. were each charged with:

- One count of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree
- One count of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree
- One count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree
- One count of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree
- One count of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree.

For her real estate investment scams, Marcia Campbell was separately charged with:

- Three counts of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree
- Three counts of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree
- Three counts of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree
- Three counts of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third degree
- One count of Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree.

If convicted on the top count of the indictment, Marcia Campbell, Fred Campbell, and Frank Palmer each face a maximum of 15 years in prison.

The charges are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

This investigation was conducted by Investigators Angel LaPorte and Veronica Perez, under the supervision of Detective Supervisor Anna Ospanov and Deputy Chief Investigator Juanita Bright. The Investigations Division is led by Chief Investigator Oliver Pu-Folkes.



The case is being prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Nazy Modiri and Special Assistant Attorney General Samantha Sizemore. Assistant Attorney General Nazy Modiri works in the Real Estate Enforcement Unit and Public Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Real Estate Enforcement Unit Chief, Nicholas Batsidis, and Public Integrity Bureau Chief Gerard Murphy and Deputy Bureau Chief Kiran Heer. The audit was undertaken by Auditor Investigator Kristina Patterson under the supervision of Deputy Chief Auditor Sandy Bizzarro, and Chief Auditor Kristen Fabbri. Also assisting in the prosecution are Legal Support Analysts Hannah Mueller and Giorgio Rahal, under the supervision of Supervising Analyst Sara Pogorzelski. The Criminal Justice Division is led by Chief Deputy Attorney General José Maldonado and overseen by First Deputy Attorney General Jennifer Levy.

The OAG thanks the Bronx County District Attorney's Office for allowing Assistant District Attorney Samantha Sizemore from the Financial Frauds Bureau of the Bronx County District Attorney's Office to be cross designated as a Special Assistant Attorney General in OAG, while under the supervision of Eugene Bykov, Supervisor of the Financial Frauds Bureau, Michelle Milanes, Deputy Chief of the Financial Frauds Bureau, and Herman Wun, Chief of the Financial Frauds Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Denise Kodjo, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, and Wanda Perez-Maldonado, Chief of the Investigations Division.

***Letitia James***

**New York State Attorney General**