



Ken Thompson
District Attorney

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KINGS COUNTY**
350 JAY STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11201-2908
(718) 250-2000
WWW.BROOKLYNDA.ORG

Press Office
718-250-2300

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, December 18, 2014

Brooklyn Woman Indicted For Defrauding Five Immigrants
Defendant Allegedly Claimed She Could Get Green Cards and Work Permits for a Fee

Brooklyn District Attorney Ken Thompson and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations New York Special Agent in Charge James T. Hayes Jr., today announced that a Brooklyn woman who allegedly promised green cards and work permits to five undocumented immigrants has been charged with stealing approximately \$12,850 from them, as well as from an undercover detective, by falsely promising to help them obtain documents.

District Attorney Thompson said, "This defendant is accused of preying on some of the most vulnerable members of our society. I created an Immigrant Fraud Unit – which is prosecuting this case – to stop such opportunists from targeting undocumented individuals."

Special Agent in Charge Hayes said, "This defendant's alleged actions served not only to victimize immigrants attempting to comply with federal laws, they also threatened to undermine confidence in the federal government."

The District Attorney said that the defendant, Nickya Wittington a/k/a Nicky John, 27, of 280 Grafton Street in Brownsville, has been arraigned by Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun on an indictment in which she is charged with first-degree scheme to defraud, third-degree grand larceny, third-degree attempted grand larceny, fourth-degree grand larceny and petit larceny. She was ordered held on \$5,000 bail and to return to court on February 4, 2015. If convicted of the top count, she faces up to seven years in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the indictment, from June 10, 2014 to December 9, 2014, Wittington falsely claimed she could obtain green cards and work permits for the alleged victims in exchange for approximately \$7,000 to \$10,000, and allegedly took down payments ranging from \$1,000 to \$6,000 cash to get the process started. The victims – who were originally from Ghana, Liberia, Guyana and Jamaica – met the defendant through mutual acquaintances.

Approximately a month after the victims made the down payments, they repeatedly tried and failed to reach the defendant and ultimately contacted the District Attorney's Action Center, which took their complaints and put them in touch with the District Attorney's Immigrant Fraud Unit.

The defendant was charged after allegedly taking \$3,250 from an undercover detective posing as an undocumented immigrant in exchange for a green card. It is alleged Wittington never filed any paperwork with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services or any agency for the victims.

The case was investigated by Detective Investigators Ismael Zayas and Roger Archer, under the supervision of Supervising Detective Investigator Robert Addonizio and the overall supervision of John Bilich, Chief of the District Attorney's Investigations Bureau.

Special Agent in Charge James T. Hayes Jr., of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HIS) New York assisted in the investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jose Interiano, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Maritza Mejia Ming, Chief of the Immigrant Fraud Unit, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney William E. Schaeffer, Chief of the Investigations Division.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.

#