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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Brooklyn Man Charged With Stealing Over \$42,000 From  
87-Year-Old Woman By Forging Checks Against Her Account**

*Victim Had Already Given Defendant Almost \$60,000*

Kings County District Attorney Kenneth P. Thompson today announced that a Brooklyn man has been charged with grand larceny and criminal possession of a forged instrument in the theft of \$42,500 from an 87-year-old retired social worker he befriended and drove on errands.

District Attorney Thompson said, "This defendant allegedly ran a scam and preyed on a vulnerable woman who trusted him. We will not tolerate such shameful acts of elder fraud anywhere in Brooklyn."

District Attorney Thompson said that Ariel Lemos Hernandez, 41, of 625 Ocean Avenue, in Flatbush, is presently awaiting arraignment in Brooklyn Criminal Court on a criminal complaint charging him with one count of third-degree grand larceny and 17 counts of second-degree possession of a forged instrument. He faces up to seven years in prison if convicted.

District Attorney Thompson said that, according to the criminal complaint, the victim, Margaret O'Donnell, met Hernandez in 2012 when Hernandez was employed as a car service driver. O'Donnell became friendly with Hernandez and frequently wrote him checks for car service trips and for what she believed were emergency car repairs, totaling \$59,000, between May 2012 and March 2014.

But beginning in November 2013 through April 2014, Hernandez is accused of stealing \$42,500 from O'Donnell by writing 17 checks against her account payable to himself for \$2,500 each.

A review of Hernandez's bank accounts shows the checks going into his account and about \$42,000 cash being removed from the account via ATM withdrawals. About \$400 was a debit charge at a restaurant.

The case was investigated by Detective Investigator Anthony Schembri of the Kings County District Attorney's Office, under the supervision of Chief John Bilich.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Karen Turner of the District Attorney's Investigations Division, under the supervision of Felice Sontupe, Chief of the District Attorney's Frauds Bureau, and William E. Schaeffer, Chief of the Investigations Division.

A criminal complaint is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.