



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST HAVERSTRAW MAN CHARGED WITH UNEMPLOYMENT FRAUD

Rockland County District Attorney Thomas P. Zugibe today announced the arrest of **Elidio Garcia** (DOB 07/16/69) of 24 Kennedy Drive, West Haverstraw, New York on charges of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class “D” Felony, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class “E” Felony.

According to the charges, **Garcia** fraudulently applied for and received Unemployment Insurance benefits. To accomplish this, the defendant allegedly filed paperwork with the New York State Department of Labor claiming he was living in the United States and was willing and able to work. As the investigation revealed, **Garcia** was not residing in the United States during several periods of time.

It is alleged that **Garcia** defrauded New York State out of more than \$12,000 in UI benefits over more than four years.

“Those who falsely apply for and receive Unemployment Insurance benefits cheat legitimately unemployed workers and increase the insurance rates paid by employers,” said District Attorney Zugibe. “Along with our partners in law enforcement, the Rockland County District Attorney’s Office will remain aggressive in bringing individuals who defraud the UI system to justice.”

“There are many Americans who may fall on hard times and use unemployment benefits to get back on their feet. **Garcia** allegedly took advantage of the very system meant to help people,” said Angel M. Melendez, special agent in charge of HSI New York. “It is a shameful act and it is with law enforcement partnerships and collaborative efforts that we are able to bring criminals like **Garcia** to justice.”

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

“Under Governor Cuomo, New York State has zero tolerance policy with regard to those who cheat the unemployment insurance system,” said State Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon. “I applaud the dedicated staff of the Department of Labor’s Office of Special Investigations who work tirelessly to uncover fraud and I thank District Attorney Zugibe for his attention to this case.”

In the early morning hours of August 9, 2017, detectives and officers from the Rockland County District Attorney’s Office Special Investigations Unit, the United States Department of Homeland Security - Homeland Security Investigations and the Town of Haverstraw Police Department arrested **Garcia** at his place of employment.

The defendant’s arrest is a culmination of an investigation conducted by the Rockland County District Attorney’s Office Special Investigations Unit, the United States Department of Homeland Security - Homeland Security Investigations and the New York State Department of Labor.

Garcia was arraigned in the Village of West Haverstraw Justice Court by the Honorable Richard S. Pakola and released on his own recognizance.

His next court appearance is scheduled for August 29, 2017.

The defendant faces up to seven years in state prison.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Robert H. Trudell is prosecuting the case.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted on RocklandCountyDA.com