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**DARCEL D. CLARK**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET  
BRONX, N.Y. 10451  
(718) 590-2234

**46-2023**  
**For Immediate Release**  
**July 13, 2023**

**BRONX WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER SENTENCED TO PAY \$681,000  
IN RESTITUTION TO ELDERLY WOMAN'S ESTATE**  
**Defendants Stole Money from Sale of 92-Year-Old's Soundview House;  
She Passed Away in December, 2022**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a Bronx mother and her daughter pleaded guilty to scheming an elderly woman out of approximately \$760,000 and were sentenced to five years of Probation, 500 hours of Community Service and ordered to pay more than \$680,000 to the deceased woman's estate.

District Attorney Clark said, "We must do more to educate our seniors about Power of Attorney scams, while stepping up to prosecute criminals who prey on our most vulnerable. The victim in this case was a 92-year-old woman, and she lost her home while they refinanced a home, took a European vacation and paid off their credit card bills."

District Attorney Clark said the defendants, Maria Garcia, 75, of Seffner, Florida, and Mara Garcia, 39, of Doral, Florida were sentenced July 10, 2023, to five years of Probation and 500 hours of Community Service by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Tara Collins. The defendants pleaded guilty to third-degree Grand Larceny, and third-degree Criminal Tax Fraud on April 21, 2023. As part of the plea agreement the defendants had to return \$225,000 in cash followed by an executed confession of Judgement for \$456,000.

They each acknowledged their tax liability: for Mara Garcia it is currently estimated at approximately \$155,000 and for Maria Garcia is currently estimated at approximately \$58,000.

According to the investigation, between June 13, 2017, and February 20, 2021, the defendants, who knew the victim through their practice of Santeria, stole approximately \$840,000 from Eladia Perez, who was 92 years old at the time, and has since passed away, including \$760,000 from the sale of her house in Soundview. The investigation found that the victim unknowingly signed numerous documents and multiple powers of attorney enabling the defendants to access, control and open bank accounts and other financial instruments, unbeknownst to the victim.



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The defendants used the money to pay for personal expenses. Mara Garcia paid off a \$18,000 dollar credit card bill and took a European vacation. Maria Garcia paid off a refinance on her home for approximately \$102,000. The defendants never paid taxes on money received from selling the stolen property.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Investigative Assistant District Attorney Sheryl A. Konigsberg of Economic Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Michelle Milanese, Deputy Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau, Herman Wun, Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Denise Kodjo, Deputy Chief of Investigations Division, and Wanda Perez-Maldonado, Chief of Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked BXDA Detective Investigator Iftekar Khan, under the supervision of Chief Frank Chiara and Deputy Chief Terence Mulderrig; and Principal Accountant Investigator Lorraine Ciechanowicz for their assistance in the investigation. District Attorney Clark also thanked Trial Preparation Assistant Audrey Manaiza of the Economic Crimes Bureau, Elder Abuse Coordinator Ellen Kolodney, and Joao D'Alessandro Supervisor of the Video Unit for their work on the case.

District Attorney Clark also thanked the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance Criminal Investigations Division, as well as Detective Pedro Cortes of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.

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