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**ALLEGED MAIL THIEF CHARGED WITH STEALING \$80,000 WORTH OF CHECKS FROM
CONSTRUCTION UNION**

*Defendant Allegedly Falsified Paperwork to Hold Mail for Metal Lathers Trust, LLC at Woodside Post
Office, Then Retrieved Mail Containing Checks
Faces Up to 15 Years in Jail if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Xingqiang Chen has been charged with grand larceny in the second degree, criminal possession of stolen property and other crimes after an investigation led by the United States Postal Inspection Service uncovered an elaborate mail theft operation by the defendant. Chen allegedly falsified authorization documents and used forged identification to place a mail hold for the Metal Lathers Local 46 Benefits Fund at a post office in Woodside on March 17. He returned to the location on Monday and retrieved the mail containing almost two dozen checks before being arrested at the scene.

District Attorney Katz said: “Protecting union workers and safeguarding the integrity of their benefits fund is of the utmost importance to my office. As alleged, the defendant went to great lengths to steal money from the Metal Lathers Local 46 Benefits Fund intended for our city’s construction workforce. Using falsified documentation, he gained access to confidential mail meant for union member benefits and swiped 21 checks that totaled more than \$80,000. My office will not allow fraudsters to steal from union members, or any resident, in Queens. Thanks to our diligent partners at the USPS and the NYPD, the defendant has been apprehended and the money intended to help union members will be returned.”

USPIS Acting Inspector in Charge Edward Gallashaw, New York Division, said: “Ensuring public trust in the US Mail is the mission of the Postal Inspection Service. This arrest is one of many examples of the commitment of Postal Inspectors, the NYPD and the Queens District Attorney to ensure the mail is delivered safely to the public. In this case, Mr. Chen allegedly stole checks from the mail that were earmarked for the Pension and Benefits Fund for a local union in Queens. This is a crime that will not go unpunished. Let this be a reminder to criminals: when you steal *mail*, you will go to *jail*.”

Chen, 29, of 11th Avenue in College Point, Queens was arraigned late last night on a criminal complaint charging him with grand larceny in the second degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree, criminal possession of a forged instrument in the second degree and falsifying business records in the first degree.

Judge Gonzalez ordered Chen to return to court on April 29. If convicted of the top count, Chen faces a potential maximum sentence of up to 15 years in prison.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, on March 17, Chen entered the United States Post Office branch located at 39-25 61st Street, Woodside, NY, and submitted an authorization to hold mail for the Metal Lathers Local 46 Benefits Fund, LLC along with a forged New Jersey driver’s license in the name of “Chang Liu.”

On March 24, at approximately 2 p.m., Chen entered the post office and requested the mail being held for the Fund. He was handed approximately 50 pieces of mail addressed to the fund and then walked out of the post office.

A USPIS agent tracking the defendant as part of the agency’s targeted law enforcement surge apprehended Chen at the scene. The recovered mail contained 21 checks issued to the fund with an aggregate value of approximately \$81,583.

Members of the NYPD provided crucial assistance.

Assistant District Attorney Jeremy Mo of the District Attorney’s Major Economic Crimes Bureau is

prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Catherine C. Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, and Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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