



MELINDA KATZ DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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A Message from District Attorney

MELINDA KATZ

FORMER COUNCIL CANDIDATE CHARGED WITH FORGERY

We charged a former political candidate with forgery and criminal possession of a forged instrument for allegedly using artificial intelligence in a deliberate effort to mislead voters ahead of the 2025 City Council election.

The defendant allegedly created and posted AI-generated images on his social media accounts that falsely depicted endorsements from individuals and organizations that had not backed his candidacy.

As alleged, the forged graphics included a legitimate endorsement sheet that the defendant modified to falsely depict support for his own campaign.

He is also alleged to have posted fake news articles to harm his opponent.

In today's world it is important to hold people accountable for materially misrepresenting facts, particularly when those altered facts are being directed at voters. The defendant's alleged actions also victimized non-profit organizations, public institutions and news outlets.

In Friendship,

STAY CONNECTED



WORKERS CHEATED BY BOSS GET RESTITUTION

District Attorney Melinda Katz recently returned \$28,000 in stolen wages to 30 former employees of a cleaning company whose owner was convicted this year of failing to pay workers.

"When an employer steals money from a worker's paycheck, it's not just a crime. The employer is also stealing their dignity," DA Katz said.

The owner pleaded guilty in February to scheme to defraud in the first degree, grand larceny in the third degree and failure to pay wages in accordance with the labor law. He was sentenced in April to five years' probation in addition to making restitution of over \$28,000.

His wife also pleaded guilty to failure to pay wages in accordance with the labor law and was sentenced to a conditional discharge.

Both defendants are barred from incorporating a business in New York for five years.

The owner placed advertisements seeking cleaners and hired individuals with the promise that the employees would be paid their wages within seven days. The employees were also advised they would be reimbursed for the cleaning

supplies they purchased.

The husband and wife used multiple strategies to deny employees their wages. In some cases, employees were directed to hold onto payroll checks until given express permission to cash them. The couple also gave employees checks issued with a future date or issued checks from an account with insufficient funds.

"Thanks to an investigation by my Housing, Worker and Consumer Protection Bureau we were able to put a stop to the exploitation perpetrated by these defendants and get restitution for the victims," DA Katz said.

The DA's office worked in conjunction with the New York State Department of Labor and the Worker's Justice Project to put a stop to this corruption.

The DA is committed to stopping worker abuse and to keeping employees safe.

The office's Housing, Worker and Consumer Protection Bureau actively investigates these kinds of cases and will prosecute when warranted. If you have been a victim of wage theft, contact the DA's office at 718-286-6673.



DEFENDANT CONVICTED FOR BEATING DELI WORKER



A Forest Hills resident recently pleaded guilty to attempted murder, first-degree assault and other crimes for the vicious beating of a 62-year-old deli worker at the Sunnyside Mini Market in Woodside in June 2024.

The assault started just after the 31-year-old defendant, Osvel Diaz, entered the store and he and the worker bumped into each other.

Diaz repeatedly punched the worker in the head, threw him to the ground and continued to kick and punch the victim repeatedly.

While the worker was still on the floor, Diaz kicked him in the head and knocked him unconscious. Diaz continued the assault with multiple kicks to the worker's head and face.

"This was a senseless and violent assault of a deli worker that nearly left the man dead," DA Katz said. "Our thoughts are with the victim as he continues to recover from his extensive injuries."

The victim sustained a brain hemorrhage, facial fractures, a broken eye socket and other injuries and underwent multiple surgeries. He survived but must live the rest of his life with a traumatic brain injury and cognitive impairment due to the beating, she said.

Osvel is facing 19 years in prison at sentencing.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our neighborhoods and those who seek to harm workers and customers will be held accountable, the DA said.

CASES OF INTEREST

A defendant whose 1993 murder conviction was overturned on appeal, was convicted again by a jury that deliberated for less than a day. **Michael Robinson** was found guilty of murder in the second degree for stabbing his estranged, pregnant 29-year-old wife to death in the residence (pictured) where she worked as a housekeeper.

The 59-year-old defendant faces up to 25 years to life in prison when sentenced.

In a separate case, a defendant who was practicing medicine without a license pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the second degree for killing a 31-year-old woman following a botched surgical procedure.

Felipe Hoyos Foronda, 40, was performing a procedure to remove buttock implants from the



victim in his Astoria home. The woman went into cardiac arrest after the defendant injected her with lidocaine and a saline solution. She died two weeks later. Foronda faces up to 15 years in prison.

BRAVE JUSTICE SUMMER INTERNS

The office welcomed 48 future lawyers from 24 different law schools, as well as 23 undergraduates from 17 colleges, to be part of the DA's Brave Justice Summer Intern Program.

For nine weeks, the interns will learn from veteran prosecutors. They will tour the NYPD training academy and other facilities, work alongside assistant district attorneys and join in the fun at the office's annual summer softball game.



PRIDE AND ISRAEL DAY PARADES

DA Katz, along with members of the office, joined in a celebration of inclusion, equality and justice by marching in the annual Queens Pride Parade and Multicultural Festival in Jackson Heights, the second oldest and second largest pride parade in New York City.

The DA proudly joined the Jewish

Community Relations Council of New York for the annual Israel Day Parade along Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. During the festivities, DA Katz mingled with Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and numerous others who came out to support the Jewish state and the Jewish community at large.

