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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Former Public Administrator Employee to be Sentenced for Stealing
Over \$78,000 From Estates of Eight Decedents**
Used Stolen Funds on a Cruise, Bills, Shopping and More

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, together with New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Margaret Garnett, today announced that a former case manager at the Office of the Kings County Public Administrator has pleaded guilty and will be sentenced to make full restitution and serve five years' probation following a 60-day jail term that he began today. He admitted stealing more than \$78,000 from the eight deceased individuals whose estates his agency was administering.

District Attorney Gonzalez said, "I am committed to thwarting corruption and abuse of power and holding accountable those who betray the public trust. This defendant was entrusted to administer the estates of deceased individuals, but shamelessly chose to steal from them instead – causing additional grief to their loved ones."

Commissioner Garnett said, "This public servant abused his authority as a representative of the Public Administrator's Office by stealing tens of thousands of dollars from the estates of several deceased persons and lining his own pockets. Now, he has a criminal felony conviction and will pay back in full the money he stole. DOI thanks the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office for their partnership and prosecution of this case."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Fitzroy Thompson, 37, of Park Slope, Brooklyn. He pleaded guilty to second-degree grand larceny on January 9, 2019 before Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun, who today remanded the defendant to serve 60 days in jail. When he completes the jail term, he will be formally sentenced on May 15, 2019, to five years' probation and must make full restitution by the end of the probationary term.

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, the defendant was employed as a case manager at the Office of the Kings County Public Administrator, which administers estates of those who die without a last will and testament or without family members able to administer their estates. Between July 2017 and April 2018, the defendant stole a total of \$78,325 in funds from estates being administered by the Public Administrator.

The defendant used credit cards and checking accounts belonging to estates of eight decedents whose cases he handled or could access to make various purchases and payments. In January 2018, he booked a cruise with Carnival Cruise Line, using one of the decedent's credit cards to pay a \$2,741 fee, the investigation found. He also used estate funds unlawfully to make ATM withdrawals exceeding \$35,000, to make lease payments on a 2017 Nissan Pathfinder and a 2016 Nissan Altima, to make rent payments in connection with two properties, to pay phone and cable bills, to buy JetBlue airline tickets to Nassau, Bahamas and to make purchases at Walmart, Fingerhut and other retailers.

The defendant was arrested in March 2018 after the executor of one estate noticed charges on his deceased relative's account, including the cruise payment, and filed a police report. A subsequent investigation discovered the additional larcenies. The defendant was suspended upon his arrest and resigned from the Office of the Public Administrator.

District Attorney Gonzalez thanked the Kings County Public Administrator's Office, its staff and Public Administrator Richard Buckheit for their cooperation and assistance with this investigation.

The case was investigated by Senior Investigative Auditor Helen Gromadsky and former Deputy Inspector General and Special Counsel Inna Spector of the New York City Department of Investigation, under the supervision of Inspector General Eleonora Rivkin, Associate Commissioner Andrew Brunsten. The case was also investigated by New York City Police Department Detective Mitchell Eisenberg of the 60th Precinct Detective Squad.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Adam Libove, of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit with the assistance of Investigative Paralegal Zachary Gitman, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michel Spanakos, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Investigations Division and the overall supervision of Assistant District Attorney Patricia McNeill, Chief of the Investigations Division.

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