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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Brooklyn Contractors Indicted for Allegedly Stealing \$93,000
From Five Customers Who Hired Them to Perform Plumbing and Gas Work**
Defendants, Who Were not Licensed, Allegedly Took Money for Work they Didn't Complete

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, together with Acting New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Daniel G. Cort, today announced that two unlicensed Brooklyn contractors and their company have been arraigned on an indictment in which they are charged with grand larceny and scheme to defraud for fraudulently representing they were licensed plumbers and allegedly taking money from five customers in Brooklyn, Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens to do work, then walking off the jobs without completing or properly performing the work.

District Attorney Gonzalez said, "These defendants allegedly engaged in a lengthy and brazen scheme that took advantage of homeowners who put their trust in them. We will continue to investigate fraud and corruption in the home improvement industry and to seek justice for those who are victimized by unscrupulous or dishonest contractors."

Acting DOI Commissioner Cort said, "These defendants posed as professional, licensed plumbers when they were not; and engaged in plumbing, gas and other remodeling work that they were not licensed to perform; and then failed to complete the work, stealing tens of thousands of dollars from New York City homeowners, according to the charges. Their charged actions reflect no regard for homeowner safety, as they walked off unfinished jobs, leaving homeowners in the costly position of having to hire credentialed professionals to complete the jobs correctly. DOI thanks the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office and the City Department of Buildings for their partnership on this important investigation that demonstrates how corruption can undermine safety."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Peter DiMassi, 49, of Staten Island, and Marcello Stemma, 42, of Bethpage, New York, and the company that they co-own, Best Priced Construction, Inc., of Brooklyn. They were arraigned today before Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice John Hecht on an indictment in which they are charged with third-degree grand larceny and first-degree scheme to defraud. They were released without bail and ordered to return to court on February 1, 2022.

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, between September 21, 2017 and August 5, 2021, the defendants contracted with five different customers to perform

plumbing and gas work at their respective properties, one in Brooklyn, one in Manhattan, two in the Bronx and one in Queens.

The defendants, according to the investigation, allegedly claimed verbally or in written estimates that they were licensed plumbers or that they were authorized to work under a licensed plumber – which was not true. In fact, they were not licensed and had no legal professional affiliation with the licensed plumbers whose license numbers were listed on their estimates and contracts.

The customers allegedly paid the defendants amounts ranging from \$7,000 to \$34,000 for work that was not properly performed or completed. At each property they allegedly walked off the job after getting into a dispute with the customer, who then had to hire another contractor to finish the work or spend additional funds.

The case was investigated by a Detective Investigator from the District Attorney's Investigations Bureau and New York City Department of Investigation Chief of Investigations Barry Romm and Assistant Inspectors General Dan Taylor and Robert Miller.

The District Attorney thanked the New York City Department of Buildings for its assistance in the case.

People who believe they have been victimized by these defendants are encouraged to contact the District Attorney's Action Center at 718-250-2340.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Adam Libove, Deputy Chief of the Public Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Laura Neubauer, Bureau Chief, and Assistant District Attorney Michel Spanakos, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, and the overall supervision of Assistant District Attorney Patricia McNeill, Chief of the Investigations Division.

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An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.