

Attorney General James Stops Forged Temporary License Plate Scheme Operating in Brooklyn

Tyheem Evans Used Instagram to Sell Forged Temporary License Plates to Customers in New York and Nationwide

NEW YORK – New York Attorney General Letitia James today announced the arrest and sentencing of Tyheem Evans, 28, of Brooklyn, for selling more than 50 forged temporary license plates to customers throughout New York and in other states. An investigation led by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), and the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) found that Evans used Instagram to advertise and sell forged temporary license plates to customers, claiming these plates were valid in every state. Evans' scheme lasted over a year and defrauded at least 52 customers across multiple states. Evans pleaded guilty today in Kings County Criminal Court to one felony count for creating and selling forged license plates.

“Tyheem Evans defrauded drivers and the DMV with a petty scheme to line his own pockets while making our roads less safe,” said **Attorney General James**. “I thank our partners in law enforcement and the DMV for their invaluable assistance in this case and their work ensuring all those who violate the law are held accountable. I encourage all New Yorkers seeking license plates to follow the legal process and register with the DMV.”

“This defendant pleaded guilty and was sentenced today for using social media to advertise and sell forged temporary license plates for a fee to more than four dozen customers,” said **DOI Commissioner Nadia I. Shihata**. “Forged temporary license plates undercut safety on our roads by creating ‘ghost cars’ that render drivers untraceable and can also disguise other offenses such as the failure to properly register a car with the Department of Motor Vehicles. I thank the New York State Attorney General’s Office and the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles for their partnership on this investigation and their commitment to protecting drivers from the serious impact of fraud.”

“I want to commend the work of our DMV investigators and the collaboration with the Attorney General’s office and other law enforcement to bring this dangerous scheme to a halt,” said **DMV Acting Commissioner Christian Jackstadt**. “It has been a top priority of Governor Hochul’s administration to crack down on efforts to stop those who would use fake plates to get out of paying their fair share for registering vehicles or for the tolls that go to cover the cost of maintaining New York’s roads, not to mention those who have made use of fake plates in the process of committing a crime. We will find you and you will be held responsible for your actions.”

The investigation revealed that between April 2022 and September 2023, Evans used an Instagram page he controlled, @DMVTemps, to advertise and sell 30-day, 60-day,

and 90-day temporary license plates, which he claimed were valid in any state. Evans charged up to \$210 per license plate and sold more than 50 forged temporary license plates for states including California, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, and Virginia, among others.

Fraudulent temporary license plates create “ghost cars” that can evade tolls and tickets and render a driver untraceable in the event of a crash or a crime. These plates also obscure the fact that a car has not been lawfully registered with the DMV and may not be fully insured.

Evans utilized direct messaging on Instagram to collect information from customers on their cars, including make, model, year, color, and VIN. He then directed customers to send money to him via Zelle. Once Evans received the funds, he used his personal email account to send the forged temporary license plates as PDF attachments to his customers.

Evans pleaded guilty today before Judge Jane Tully to one count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree (a class D felony). Evans was sentenced to a three-year conditional discharge and 100 hours of community service.

The OAG thanks the DOI and DMV for their partnership in the investigation and prosecution of this case.

The investigation was handled by DOI Deputy Inspector General Jordan Buff with DOI’s Office of the Inspector General for the New York City Department of Transportation, under the supervision of Inspector General Kathryn Spota, Associate Commissioner Robert Galindo, Acting Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Audrey Feldman, and Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, with assistance from DOI’s NYPD Detective Squad. DMV Senior Investigator Carina Bonora also assisted in the investigation.

For OAG, Detectives Sal Ventola and William Fitzgerald assisted in the investigation under the direction of OAG Detective Supervisor Anna Ospanova and Deputy Chief Juanita Bright of the Major Investigations Unit, with assistance from Special Operation Detectives John Collins and Wilsonia Jean-Phillippe, under the direction of Special Operations Unit Detective Supervisor Norm Doyle, who is under Deputy Chief Investigator Sean Donovan. The Investigations Bureau is led by Chief Oliver Pu-Folkes.

The prosecution in this matter is being handled by Assistant Attorneys General Abigail Margulies and Matthew Luongo and former Assistant Attorney General Russell Satin, under the supervision of Public Integrity Bureau Chief Gerard Murphy, Deputy Bureau Chief Mary Gorman, and Senior Counsel to the Criminal Justice Division Kiran Heer, with assistance from Analysts Samantha Shaughnessy and Alexandra Crespo, as well as former Analyst Hannah Mueller. Both the Investigations Bureau and the Public Integrity Bureau are part of the Division for Criminal Justice. The Division for Criminal

Justice is led by Chief Deputy Attorney General José Maldonado and overseen by First Deputy Attorney General Jennifer Levy.

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