



**CYRUS R. VANCE, JR.**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

DISTRICT ATTORNEY – NEW YORK COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**DISTRICT ATTORNEY VANCE ANNOUNCES GUILTY PLEA OF LIQUOR  
LICENSE EXPEDITER**

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., today announced the guilty plea of ELLEN LEE, a self-employed expediter operating ABC Liquor License Corporation in Flushing, New York. LEE filed forged and inaccurate applications with the New York State Liquor Authority (“SLA”), and pleaded guilty on June 30, 2010, to Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E Felony.

“The rules of the State Liquor Authority exist to protect the character of our neighborhoods and control the sale of alcohol,” said District Attorney Vance. “False documents like the ones filed by the defendant lead directly to the establishment of bars in areas where they do not belong, and to the issuance of liquor licenses to people who are prohibited from selling alcohol. I thank the SLA for bringing this matter to our attention, and we will continue to assist City and State agencies to maintain the standards and safety of our neighborhoods.”

According to documents filed in court, LEE assisted her clients in their efforts to obtain liquor licenses for their businesses from the SLA by preparing and submitting the applications directly to the SLA’s offices in Manhattan. Prosecutors determined that more than 170 applications submitted by LEE to the SLA contained numerous types of false statements and false information, including forged signatures. SLA employees uncovered the defendant’s scheme during an internal investigation, and worked with the District Attorney’s Office to investigate the scope of LEE’s criminal conduct.

One of the many requirements for an SLA application is a “Proof of Citizenship Affirmation,” which requires applicants to supply documents regarding their citizenship status. The affirmation can only be submitted by an attorney duly admitted to practice. On more than 70 applications that LEE prepared and submitted for individual clients, she entered the information and signed the names for two different attorneys without their knowledge or permission. LEE, through her plea, also acknowledged that she submitted at least 100 additional applications that contained those and other false statements and inaccuracies.

SLA Deputy CEO Michael Jones said: “If you submit fraudulent applications to the State Liquor Authority we will catch you, the DA will prosecute you, and you will face serious consequences. The Manhattan District Attorney’s tough action reinforces the SLA's commitment to ensuring the integrity of the licensing process for all who sell alcoholic beverages.”

District Attorney Vance thanked Assistant District Attorney Brian P. Weinberg of the Rackets Bureau, who handled the case under the supervision of Bureau Chief Eric Seidel. Investigators Michael Wigdor and Stephen McCallion and Investigative Analyst Michael Morris also assisted with the case.

The District Attorney also thanked the New York State Liquor Authority and Chairman Dennis Rosen for their participation in this joint investigation, specifically Deputy CEO Jones and SLA investigators Franklin Englander and Alfred Braxton.

Defendant Information:

Ellen Lee, D.O.B. 1/4/71  
Queens, NY

Charge:

- Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, 1 count, Class E felony

A Class E felony is punishable by up to 1 1/3 to 4 years in prison.

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