



NEWS RELEASE

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HOMEOWNER INDICTED FOR MANSLAUGHTER

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:

January 24, 2012

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announces that on Tuesday, January 24, 2012, the Passaic County Grand Jury returned a four count indictment against Florence Brown, age 62, of Paterson, New Jersey. The indictment charges Brown with four counts of Manslaughter, a violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:11-4b(1), a crime of the second degree.

The indictment alleges that on or about June 30, 2010, Brown recklessly caused the death of four people, by failing to make necessary electrical repairs to a multi-family building located at 465 East 31st Street, Paterson, causing a fire at the building resulting in the death of four people.

The charges arise out of an investigation conducted by the Arson Unit of the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, as well as the Paterson Police Department and the Paterson Fire Department. The fire occurred at approximately 4:00 a.m., in the basement of a three story house owned by Florence Brown. The cause of the fire is alleged to be an electrical overload due to faulty wiring. At the time of the fire, nine people were living in the house. The victims are Betty Johnson, Mark Smith, Latita Buckerham and Darrell Hammerick.

Manslaughter, a crime of the second degree, is punishable by up to ten years in State Prison.

An indictment is merely an accusation and Ms. Brown is presumed innocent of the charges unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Passaic County Chief Assistant Prosecutor James G. Wilson is prosecuting the case against Brown. If you have any questions, please contact Chief Assistant Prosecutor Wilson at (973) 837-7655 or jwilson@passaiccountynj.org.