



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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## **LAWSUIT ALLEGES RACE DISCRIMINATION AT ASTORIA APARTMENT BUILDING**

Today, the Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC) announced the filing of a federal race discrimination lawsuit against the owners and managers of a 72-unit apartment building located in Astoria (Queens), New York. The complaint alleges that a two month investigation was conducted by the FHJC into the rental practices of the Broadway Crescent Apartments located at 23-35 Broadway in Astoria. According to the complaint, four matched teams of comparably qualified African American and white testers visited the apartment building. Each time, agents told African American testers that no apartments were available and no apartments were shown. White testers who made identical housing requests were told about and, in most instances, shown available apartments. The suit alleges that the building owner, Broadway Crescent Realty, Inc., building management company M & N Management Corp, and their agents Louie Dodaj and his wife, are discriminating against prospective renters based on race.

According to the complaint, African American renter households comprise less than 3% of all renter households in the neighborhood where the Broadway Crescent Apartments are located. African American renter households make up 17% of all renter households in Queens and 27% of all renter households in New York City according to the 2000 Census.

The federal lawsuit seeks an injunction to stop the discrimination, relief to prevent future discriminatory acts, recovery of compensatory and punitive damages, and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. The plaintiffs are represented by the law firm of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff and Abady LLP.

FHJC Board President Bernhard Blythe stated, "The persistence of discrimination against African Americans in New York City's rental market is unfair, unlawful, and unacceptable. We will continue to focus our limited organizational resources on eradicating all forms of discrimination that restrict the ability of New Yorkers to access housing on an equal basis."

Attorney Diane L. Houk commented, "It is just as offensive and hurtful to lie to renters about available apartments based on race as it is to slam a door in their face. These subtle and unlawful actions not only deceive African American renters and deny housing choice, but they harm the entire community by perpetuating racial segregation."

The mission of the FHJC is to challenge systemic housing discrimination, promote open and inclusive communities, and strengthen fair housing enforcement. The FHJC assists individuals who encounter illegal housing discrimination by providing counseling on fair housing rights, investigative assistance (including testing), and referrals to administrative agencies and cooperating attorneys. Persons who encounter illegal housing discrimination are encouraged to call the FHJC at (212) 400-8201.

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