



CYRUS R. VANCE, JR.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

DISTRICT ATTORNEY – NEW YORK COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FORMER DEPT. OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS EMPLOYEE AND CO-
DEFENDANT INDICTED FOR STEALING FROM LICENSE APPLICANTS**

*Frank Cofield and Anthony Hunt Charged With Stealing Thousands of Dollars
From Individuals Applying for Licenses to Operate Newsstands*

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., today announced the indictment of FRANK COFIELD, 32, and ANTHONY HUNT, 23, a former New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”) employee, for defrauding at least two people applying for licenses to operate newsstands. The defendants are charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, among other charges.¹

“City employees are called ‘public servants’ for a reason – they are supposed to assist New Yorkers,” said District Attorney Vance. “Instead, one of the defendants used his position to gain the trust of immigrants with limited incomes in order to steal money from them – money that could have been used to grow their businesses. Entrepreneurs and small-business owners are an important part of the city’s economy, and those who seek to defraud others of hard-earned money and the opportunities that come with it face criminal consequences.”

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said: “These defendants used one’s City position to trick and steal from license applicants, according to the indictment. But their corruption was exposed and stopped by DOI’s investigation. DOI will continue to work with our City colleagues and the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office to stem this kind of charged crime.”

NYC Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz said: “As soon as we learned that a DCA employee had taken money under the table, we immediately referred the allegations to the City’s Department of Investigation. Nothing is more important to us than that each of the 78,000 business owners whom we license is treated fairly and honestly when

¹The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

they walk into our Licensing Center and we're grateful to District Attorney Vance and DOI for taking action against this former employee.”

According to documents filed in court and statements made on the record in court, between May 26, 2010 and August 6, 2010, the defendants were able to steal approximately \$8,500 from two Bangladeshi immigrants applying for licenses to operate a newsstand. HUNT met the victims while employed as a clerk in the Special Applications Department of the DCA, the municipal agency responsible for issuing commercial licenses and permits. He offered to introduce the victims to a lawyer with experience preparing and submitting license applications and put them in contact with COFIELD. HUNT and COFIELD claimed they could help victims apply for a license to operate a newsstand in exchange for money. Both victims believed that HUNT and COFIELD were legitimately working on their behalf, and that COFIELD was their lawyer. In fact, COFIELD is not an attorney and never attended law school.

In one case, HUNT arranged for the victim to meet COFIELD, who told the victim that payment was necessary to ensure the application's approval. COFIELD later falsely told the victim that his application would soon be approved, but he would “kill the deal” unless COFIELD were paid more money. After COFIELD received additional money, HUNT provided the victim with a forged letter on DCA letterhead, falsely stating that the victim's application had been approved by the New York City Department of Transportation (“DOT”).

In another case, HUNT approached the victim at the DCA's offices in Manhattan and provided the victim with the phone number of an individual HUNT claimed was an attorney able to assist with license applications. COFIELD, again falsely identifying himself as a lawyer, continued to speak with the victim and collect multiple checks for his non-existent legal services during subsequent meetings.

Neither of the victims was granted a license to operate a newsstand by DCA. The investigation into this case is continuing.

Assistant District Attorney Amy Justiniano is handling the prosecution of the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Thomas Wornom, Chief of the Special Prosecutions Bureau, Assistant District Attorney Judy Salwen, Deputy Bureau Chief of the Special Prosecutions Bureau, and Assistant District Attorney Dan Cort, Chief of the Public Integrity Unit.

District Attorney Vance thanked DOI Investigator Matthew Befort for his assistance with the case.

Defendant Information:

FRANK COFIELD, D.O.B. 10/26/1980
New York, NY

Charges:

- Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, 1 count
- Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, a class E felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a class E felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, By Extortion, a class E felony, 1 count

Defendant Information:

ANTHONY HUNT, D.O.B. 8/28/1989
Brooklyn, NY

Charges:

- Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, 1 count
- Forgery in the Second Degree, a class D felony, 1 count
- Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, 1 count
- Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, a class E felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a class E felony, 1 count
- Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a class E felony, 1 count
- Issuing a False Certificate, a class E felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, By Extortion, a class E felony, 1 count
- Coercion in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, 1 count
- Coercion in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, 1 count
- Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, 1 count
- Practicing or Appearing as an Attorney-At-Law Without Being Admitted And Registered, 2 counts

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