



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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DOI ARRESTS MOVER FOR STEALING 2 PICASSO DRAWINGS
His Mother-in-law also Arrested in Connection with Theft of Drawings
Allegedly Taken from Deceased Art Collector

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrests of NAHUM "NINO" KOHEN, a moving contractor, and ORI LELLOUCH, his mother-in-law, on charges relating to the theft last spring of two drawings by Pablo Picasso from the Upper East Side apartment of art collector William Kingsland. The drawings, worth an estimated \$60,000, were taken after Kingsland died in March. DOI began its investigation in June after the New York County Public Administrator (PA) told DOI that the two Picasso drawings were missing and believed stolen. DOI has oversight of activities surrounding the PA's office.

KOHEN, 38, of Fresh Meadows, was charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree, class C felonies. If convicted, he faces up to 15 years in prison. LELLOUCH, 56, of Kew Gardens Hills, has been charged with Criminal Possession of Stolen Property, a class A misdemeanor. If convicted she faces up to 1 year in prison.

"Not only are these defendants charged with stealing from their own customers but from the dead," said DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn. "Stealing on the job is not a fringe benefit. Most realize that it could lead to jail and a criminal record."

KOHEN, a subcontractor of the PA, was in Kingsland's apartment in May to cart household furnishings and bric-a-brac to the PA's warehouse in lower Manhattan. Later, the PA reported that the two Picasso drawings – of a guitar and a mandolin – were missing from Kingsland's large collection of valuable art works. DOI investigators traced the stolen drawings to KOHEN after learning from the FBI that LELLOUCH allegedly tried to sell them.

The PA had hired a consulting firm to sift through the Kingsland estate's numerous art works and assist the PA in marketing the particularly valuable items. On April 25, 2006 the consultant photographed the two Picasso drawings in the apartment and included them in a catalogue of Kingsland's art collection that was shown to representatives of art galleries, auction houses, and other potential purchasers.

On May 5, 2006, KOHEN, a subcontractor for Liberty Movers, was hired to move Kingsland's less-valuable belongings from the apartment to a warehouse where they would be offered for sale at public auction. After the PA told DOI that the two Picassos were missing, DOI investigators assembled a list of everyone who had visited the apartment while under the PA's control and Kohen's name appeared on the list. It indicated he had been in Kingsland's apartment after the drawings were photographed there.

Meanwhile, after other valuable art works from Kingsland's collection were sold, it was discovered that some had been reported stolen years earlier. In October 2006, FBI agents investigating those reports interviewed a number of art dealers and experts. In late November, the agents were informed that a Manhattan-based art broker had tried to sell one of the two missing Picasso drawings to several auction houses. The agents learned the broker had obtained the drawing from LELLOUCH and later recovered both missing drawings from her.

The FBI alerted DOI's investigators, who, through further investigation, discovered that LELLOUCH's adult daughter is married to KOHEN.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked the FBI's Major Theft Squad for their investigative work and cooperation with DOI's investigators, and she thanked New York County Public Administrator Ethel Griffin and Liberty Moving for their cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Investigative Squad of New York City Police Department and the FBI. The office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case, which is assigned to Assistant District Attorneys Stuart Silberg and Scott Leet, under the supervision of Bureau Chief Gene Porcaro.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

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