



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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DOI ARRESTS BROOKLYN WOMAN IN \$3,000 IDENTITY THEFT

-- City HRA Employee is Victim of AT&T cell phone scam --

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of Travalyah Williams for stealing and using the identity of a City Human Resources Administration employee to order two AT&T cellular telephones. Williams had accumulated more than \$3,000 in billings by using these telephones, for which the employee was subsequently held accountable.

Williams, 26, of Brooklyn, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D Felony, and Criminal Use of an Access Device in the First Degree, a class E felony. If convicted, she faces up to seven years in jail.

Williams received and opened a letter to the victim that offered a deal on a cell phone, as well as phone service, Commissioner Gill Hearn said. Responding to the offer, Williams used the name of the victim (a former resident of Williams' apartment building) and ordered two cellular phones with service from AT&T Wireless. Williams used both phones to make more than \$2,630 in calls.

DOI began its investigation after an HRA employee said she had reviewed her credit history and learned she was held responsible for unpaid charges stemming from the purchase of two cell phones and their telephone bills. The employee neither ordered nor used the phones.

"Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes," said Commissioner Gill Hearn. "People need to protect themselves so they don't fall prey. That's why helping City employees protect themselves from identity theft has become an important mission of DOI. We've sent letters and brochures to every City employee so that they can take steps to protect their savings and credit record."

To obtain a copy of the brochure, "Preventing Identity Theft," call DOI at (212) 825-5931.

Easy ways to protect yourself from identity theft: 1) Each year order your credit report from the three credit bureaus and check for fraudulent activity; 2) Send a letter to each of the credit agencies directing them not to issue credit in your name without contacting you first; 3) Shred all documents that contain your personal identification; and 4) Do not use your Social Security number as a password."

The investigation was conducted by Gerard Hoey, DOI's Inspector General for HRA, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Joseph Caputo and Confidential Investigator Martin Lintner. The Kings County District Attorney's Office of Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case.

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