



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #013-2001

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2001

EMS LIEUTENANT ARRESTED IN \$8,300 TIME CHEAT SCAM ***-- Falsely Claimed 226 Hours Of "Phantom" Overtime By Forging Time Sheets --***

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of MICHAEL HARPER, a New York City Fire Department Emergency Medical Service (EMS) lieutenant in the Bronx, for stealing a total of \$8,380 in City salary by forging his time sheets and fraudulently claiming over 226 hours of overtime -- the equivalent of nearly 6½ weeks' work.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "New Yorkers put their lives and trust in EMS personnel every day. For even one dishonest EMS supervisor to betray this trust by skimming City funds is inexcusable."

Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen said, "Stealing City funds through fraudulent overtime entries is criminal, and the Fire Department will vigorously investigate such allegations. I want to commend members of the Fire Department who brought this matter to the attention of our Bureau of Investigations and Trials, and members of DOI's staff for their thorough investigation of this alleged crime."

DOI began an investigation in July 2000, after being notified by the Fire Department that a discrepancy had been found in HARPER'S time records.

A DOI audit revealed that, between March 7 and December 9, 2000, HARPER was paid \$8,380 for 226 hours of overtime that he falsely claimed to have worked.

The investigation disclosed that the Captain who commands HARPER's EMS unit, Battalion 26 at 1264 Boston Road in the Melrose section of the Bronx, prepared HARPER's time sheets for submission to Fire Headquarters in Brooklyn from numerical information contained on HARPER's individual "sign-in" sheets.

However, the investigation further revealed, HARPER then allegedly altered his time sheets--after the Captain had already prepared and signed them--by writing in additional overtime hours and signing the bottom of the time sheets with what purported to be the Captain's initials. HARPER, it is charged, fraudulently added a total of 226 overtime hours, in individual entries ranging from 6 hours to 33 hours, to 11 of his time sheets in the 9 months between March and December 2000.

HARPER, 50, a Bronx resident, who has been employed by EMS since 1971, currently earns an annual salary of \$47,191. He was immediately suspended without pay. HARPER was charged with Grand Larceny in the

Third Degree, Forgery in the Second Degree, Tampering with Public Records in the First Degree, and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, all Class D felonies; Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Defrauding the Government, both Class E felonies; and Official Misconduct, a Class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to Fire Commissioner Von Essen and members of his staff, especially the Fire Department's Bureau of Investigations and Trials, for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by John McMahon, DOI's Acting Inspector General for the Fire Department, and members of his staff, including Confidential Investigator Jayme Naberezny and Special Investigator Debra Monte.

The Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Kevin Zolot is handling the matter.