



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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DOI ARRESTS 2 EMTs FOR SCRAWLING GRAFFITI WHILE ANSWERING MEDICAL CALL AT NYCHA HOUSES IN BROOKLYN *SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS CATCH THEM IN THE ACT*

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1999 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of two New York City Fire Department Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) on charges relating to the writing of profane graffiti on a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) elevator. The incident occurred while the EMTs were responding to a medical call at the NYCHA development in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn three weeks ago.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, on April 8, 1999, EMTs RONALD T. COYNE and his partner, GARY J. RUIZ, who were assigned to the 44th Battalion in Brooklyn, responded to a call at the NYCHA Albany Houses, located at 1414 Bergen Street. Despite signs in the lobby warning that the premises -- including the elevators -- were being monitored by the Video Interactive Patrol Enhanced Response (VIPER) Unit, a section of the Housing Bureau of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) specifically assigned to observe the Albany Houses, COYNE and RUIZ used magic markers to draw and write vulgar remarks, including, "[expletive deleted] U all. Get a job," on the elevator walls.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "These two defendants, caught on camera while one of them scrawled a malicious message insinuating that NYCHA residents don't work, are the ones who should think about getting a job -- a new one. Their ugly actions do a disservice to the reputation of the overwhelming majority of good, honest, and decent City employees."

Mr. Kuriansky expressed his appreciation to the NYPD's VIPER Unit for its assistance and cooperation during the course of the investigation.

COYNE, 31, of 47 Arkansas Avenue in Bayshore, has been employed as an EMT since 1994. RUIZ, 31, of 115 Burns Avenue in Hicksville, has been employed as an EMT since 1993. The Fire Department has suspended both EMTs.

COYNE was charged with the crimes of Criminal Mischief in the Fourth Degree, Making Graffiti, and Possession of Graffiti Instruments. If convicted, he faces up to one year in prison.

RUIZ was charged with the crimes of Attempted Criminal Mischief in the Fourth Degree, Attempted Making Graffiti, and Possession of Graffiti Instruments. If convicted, he faces up to 90 days in jail.

The investigation was conducted by Felicia Mennin, DOI's Inspector General for the Fire Department, and

members of her staff, with the assistance of Steven A. Pasichow, DOI Assistant Commissioner and Inspector General for NYCHA, and his staff.

The Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Richard Farrell, of the Civil Rights Bureau of the Rackets Division, is handling the matter.