



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

Release # 027-2002

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2002

### **NYCHA TENANT ARRESTED IN HOUSING FRAUD** ***-- Submitted Frudulent Rent Receipt In Staten Island Housing Court --***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), and WILLIAM L. MURPHY, Richmond County District Attorney, today announced the felony arrest of SANDRA MEDINA, a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) tenant residing in NYCHA's South Beach Houses on Staten Island, for falsifying an \$800 rent receipt purporting to show that she had made a rent payment when in fact she had not.

According to Commissioner Gill Hearn and District Attorney Murphy, on or about June 25, 2001, NYCHA brought eviction proceedings against MEDINA, a NYCHA tenant since 1991, for failure to pay her rent. During a November 7, 2001 proceeding in Civil Court's Housing Part, MEDINA agreed to make an \$800 rent payment to NYCHA, by November 30, 2001.

At MEDINA's next scheduled court appearance, on December 5, 2001, she presented NYCHA representatives with a CashPoint Network Services, Inc. (CashPoint) receipt, in the amount of \$800, as "proof" that she, or someone on her behalf, had made a rent payment on November 26, 2001, at Hylan Cards & Gifts, located at 1110 Hylan Boulevard in Staten Island. As a result, NYCHA discontinued its case against MEDINA, reserving its right, however, to reinstate eviction proceedings if NYCHA was not in receipt of MEDINA's payment.

Commissioner Gill Hearn explained that NYCHA tenants have the option to pay their rent, in cash, at one of several CashPoint agents located near most of NYCHA's housing developments. Hylan Cards & Gifts is one such CashPoint agent.

DOI began an investigation soon after MEDINA's December 5, 2001 court appearance, upon notification by a NYCHA South Beach Housing Assistant that MEDINA's purported November 26, 2001 CashPoint rent payment had never been posted to NYCHA's account.

The investigation revealed that the CashPoint receipt presented to NYCHA by MEDINA was a forgery, replete with errors and omissions, including misspellings, incorrect format and spacing, missing text, incorrect agent site number, and incorrect NYCHA code number. The investigation further determined that no \$800 payment had been made at Hylan Cards & Gifts on November 26, 2001.

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MEDINA, 27, of 147 Norway Avenue, in Staten Island, has been charged with Forgery in the Second Degree and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, both Class D felonies; Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Tampering with Physical Evidence, both Class E felonies; and Attempted Petit Larceny, a Class B misdemeanor. If convicted, she faces up to 7 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and NYCHA Inspector General Steven A. Pasichow and members of his staff, including Counsel to the Inspector General Judith Abruzzo and Investigative Attorney Rachel Adler.

Assistant District Attorney Karen Varriale, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Mario Mattei, is prosecuting the case.

Commissioner Gill Hearn urges anyone who has information or evidence of wrongdoing within NYCHA to contact DOI's Inspector General at 212-306-3355.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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