



Department of Investigation *Press Release*

Release #047-2000

Manhattan Woman Arrested In Counterfeit City Scam

-Cashed 2 Bogus DOF Bail Refund Checks Totaling \$2,200-

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2000 – EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of CATHLEEN EDWARDS for cashing 2 counterfeit City Department of Finance (DOF) bail refund checks, totaling \$2,200, at 2 different check cashing outlets in Manhattan one day last month. Later that same day, she had been arrested while trying to cash a third identical phony check in the Bronx.

Commissioner Kuriansky said that a bail refund check is routinely issued by DOF's Bureau of Treasury/Bail Refund Unit to reimburse an individual or bail bondsman, at the conclusion of a criminal case, for bail they posted for a defendant.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOI began an investigation late last month, when Rite Check Cashing, Inc., reported that EDWARDS, on May 20, 2000, had cashed a counterfeit \$1,100 DOF bail refund check at its outlet at 2602 Frederick Douglas Boulevard in upper Manhattan

The investigation disclosed that EDWARDS, on May 20, between 9 and 10 a.m., had presented a bogus DOF bail refund check at the Rite Check Cashing outlet, offered a New York State non-driver photo identification card and a social security card as proof of identity, and unlawfully received \$1,100.

The investigation further revealed that EDWARDS, later the same day, between 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., had cashed a second identical counterfeit DOF bail refund check at Uneeda Check Cashing at 2033 Second Avenue in upper Manhattan. EDWARDS, a Uneeda patron since September 1990, whose customer card was kept on file, had presented a New York State non-driver photo ID card as proof of identity, and again unlawfully obtained \$1,100.

Several hours later, at about 4:20 p.m., EDWARDS was arrested at CLB Check Cashing Corporation at 1865 Bruckner Blvd. in the Bronx, after she presented a third phony \$1,100 DOF bail refund check for cashing. In this instance, a clerk became suspicious and called the police.

EDWARDS, 40, of 2955 Eighth Avenue in Manhattan, was charged in Manhattan with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a Class D felony, and Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a Class E felony. If convicted, she faces up to 7 years in prison. EDWARDS was previously charged in the Bronx with Tampering with Public Records in the First Degree,

a Class D felony punishable by up to 7 years in prison.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to DOF Commissioner Andrew E. Eristoff and members of his staff, and to Rita Fallings, the manager of Rite Check Cashing, Inc., and Edward Toledano, the president of Uneeda Check Cashing, and their employees, for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Vincent E. Green, DOI's Assistant Commissioner and Supervising Inspector General of DOF, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Maureen A. Thomas, Assistant Inspector General Joseph Medina, and Special Investigator Charlie Mercieca.

The Offices of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau and Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson are prosecuting the cases.