



Department of Investigation *Press Release*

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DOI ARRESTS CITY MAIL CLERK IN ONGOING "IDENTITY" THEFT PROBE
-- Used Names & SS Numbers Of 4 City Employees To Buy Music CDs, Clothes, & Make ATM Withdrawal

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of CEPHUS HARRIS, a City Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mail clerk, for stealing \$863 by using personal ID information of 4 City workers -- including an assistant director and a project coordinator in the agency, and a Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) assistant commissioner -- to fraudulently obtain major credit cards, which he used, without authorization, to purchase assorted merchandise, including music CDs and men's clothing, and also make a \$300 ATM cash withdrawal. According to Commissioner Kuriansky, the investigation, which is ongoing, began in September 2000, when DOI was notified that some employees at the agency's 75 Park Place office in lower Manhattan had been victims of "identity" fraud.

Just this past July, Commissioner Kuriansky noted, 2 Brooklyn women were indicted in a similar \$120,000 "identity" theft case, and charged with using the names and Social Security numbers of at least 10 City Department of Health and Administration for Children's Services' employees and a former Kingsborough Community College student to fraudulently obtain various credit cards with which to buy merchandise -- including bill-payer checks, carpeting, a computer, fancy lingerie, Metro cards, and mattresses -- and to vacation in Las Vegas.

Today's investigation disclosed that HARRIS, on February 8, 1999, improperly used the name of a co-worker and ordered 10 music compact discs worth \$390 from Time Life, Inc. Thereafter, when the music discs were delivered to the agency's mail room, HARRIS allegedly took them home.

The investigation further revealed that HARRIS, some 7 months later, on September 16, 1999, completed and mailed 3 credit card applications, unlawfully using the names, personal identity information, and forged signatures of 3 other co-workers. Thereafter, HARRIS used a Fleet Bank MasterCard, issued in the name of one of the 3 employees, to: (1) buy, on September 29, 1999, \$129 worth of men's clothing at Porta Bella, a men's store at 202 Broadway in Manhattan, signing, without permission, the co-worker's name to a credit card slip; (2) withdraw, on October 4, 1999, \$300 at a World Trade Center Marine Midland bank branch ATM; and (3) purchase, also on October 4, 1999, \$44 worth of merchandise from Gabriel Ark Angel, a music store, now defunct, at 676 Broadway in Manhattan.

HARRIS, 40, currently of 294 South 6th Street in Newark, New Jersey, a mail clerk since 1986 earning

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\$25,569 a year, resigned City employment on March 22, 2001. He was charged with Forgery in the Second Degree, a Class D felony; Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree, a Class E felony; and Petit Larceny, a Class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to OMB Director Adam Barsky and members of his staff, and to the NYPD Laboratory for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Inspector General for the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) Robert C. Joyce, and members of his staff, including Special Investigator Mary Kozlow and Confidential Investigators Christine Carl and Roberto Cepeda.

The Office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Tyrone Hughes, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Leroy Frazier, Jr., Chief of the DA's Special Prosecutions Bureau, is handling the matter.