



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

Release # 066-2000

### **City Foils Escape Plot Of Inmate Awaiting Trial For Murder**

***-Offered DOI Undercover \$5Gs For Gun, Silencer & Handcuff Key To Escape Correction Bus At-***

***-Staten Island Courthouse-***

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2000**

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of VICTOR BORCHERT, an inmate at the George Motchan Detention Center on Rikers Island, who is awaiting trial in a Staten Island double murder, for conspiring to escape custody by offering \$5,000 to a DOI undercover agent, who was posing as an inmate's friend, for a handgun, silencer, and handcuff key.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, BORCHERT, who was scheduled to attend a September 11 pre-trial hearing at Staten Island Supreme Court, telephoned the undercover several times between September 1 and September 8. He promised to pay \$5,000, and told the undercover to obtain a .25 caliber automatic, silencer, and handcuff key, tape them to the bottom of a seat in a Department of Correction (DOC) bus, which he said would be parked unattended outside the courthouse, and wait nearby in a stolen getaway car for BORCHERT to shoot his way off the bus. BORCHERT also said that he planned to use a home on Staten Island as a "safe house" for a few days and that he would obtain the \$5,000 to pay the undercover from his grandmother and aunt.

Commissioner Kuriansky said that the investigation began on September 1 when DOC officials learned of the possible plot and alerted DOI.

BORCHERT, who was arrested earlier today by DOI investigators, is awaiting trial on murder, arson, robbery, and burglary charges. He and 4 co-defendants are charged with the murder, on September 3, 1998, of building contractor Rocco Mercurio, 54, and his companion, Linda Torrone, 53, in their Ward Hill, Staten Island, home. BORCHERT had once been employed by Mercurio. The home was gutted by fire, and the autopsy revealed that the couple had been bound, pistol-whipped, fatally shot, doused with gasoline, and set afire.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "This defendant, who is already charged in a vicious homicide, could have endangered the lives of correction officers, inmates, courthouse personnel, and innocent bystanders alike with his desperate escape plan. Fortunately, the vigilance of jail authorities paid off and helped avert a potentially enormous tragedy."

Acting Correction Commissioner Gary M. Lanigan said, "I want to thank Commissioner Kuriansky. This operation is testimony to the strong working partnership between the Correction Department and the DOI

Inspector General's Office. The prompt and professional investigation by DOI's Inspector General for the Department of Correction, Michael Caruso, and his staff not only prevented an attempted escape, but may very well have saved the lives of officers and innocent civilians."

BORCHERT, 39, of 106-06 Jamaica Avenue in Jamaica, Queens, has been charged with Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree, a Class E felony. If convicted, he faces up to 4 years in prison.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to DOC Acting Commissioner Lanigan, DOC Chief of Security Robert Davoren, Deputy Warden Peter Mahon, Correction Officer Investigator Lawrence Williamson of DOC's Gang Intelligence Unit, and the detention facility security staff for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Michael Caruso, DOI's Inspector General for the Department of Correction, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Louis Marano, Supervising Investigator Migdalia Figueroa, and Correction Officer Investigator Brian Martin.

The case is being prosecuted by the Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson. Assistant District Attorney Richard Best is assigned to handle the matter.