



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

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### **DOI ARRESTS PVO CLERK FOR TAKING CASH PAYOFFS TO DISMISS 100s OF PARKING TICKETS**

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of JOHN SANTIAGO, a former temporary contract employee assigned as a data entry clerk to the City Department of Finance's (DOF) Parking Violations Operations (PVO), for unlawfully dismissing more than 200 parking summonses, worth nearly \$15,000, by deleting them from PVO's computerized records. In return, SANTIAGO illegally received thousands of dollars in cash bribes from over 50 scofflaws whose case records he improperly removed.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, SANTIAGO, as a data entry clerk in PVO's Commercial Adjudication Unit (CAU), was responsible for inputting the dispositions adjudicated by Administrative Law Judges of parking summonses issued to fleet and rental vehicles and those with commercial license plates. PVO's CAU handles approximately 650,000 summonses annually, generating gross revenues for the City totaling approximately \$24 million a year.

Commissioner Kuriansky said that an investigation began in September 1999, when PVO alerted DOI that SANTIAGO had dismissed various summonses, for family members and others, without authorization or supporting documentation.

The investigation disclosed that, between September 28, 1998, and October 22, 1999, SANTIAGO was employed by PVO, having been assigned, in April 1999, to PVO's CAU in Manhattan.

A review of documents processed by SANTIAGO revealed that, between June 23 and October 22, 1999, SANTIAGO had used his employee computer code to access the PVO computer and then to improperly dismiss--by deleting electronic data contained in various PVO files--a total of 214 parking tickets, with fines totaling \$14,765, which had been issued to 53 individuals, including 2 of his cousins and 2 friends who lived in his Bronx neighborhood. SANTIAGO admitted to DOI investigators that he charged all the violators a cash fee--half the total amount of their PVO fines--thereby receiving thousands of dollars in illicit payoffs.

Commissioner Kuriansky said that the dismissed parking tickets will be reinstated and that all 53 violators will be required to make full payment, including penalties and interest, to PVO.

## DOI Arrests PVO Clerk For Taking Cash Payoffs To Dismiss 100s Of Parking Tickets

SANTIAGO, 38, of 1834 Phelan Place in the Bronx, currently a self-employed maintenance worker, was charged with Tampering With Public Records in the First Degree and Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, both Class D felonies. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to DOF Commissioner Andrew S. Eristoff, Assistant Commissioner Michael Phillips of Parking Violations Operations, and the Fraud Investigation Unit of PVO for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and PVO Inspector General Vincent E. Green and members of his staff, including Assistant Inspector General Alberta E. Ancrum, Special Investigator Joseph Medina, and Confidential Investigator Dalila Cummings.

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