



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN  
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE  
NEW YORK, NY 10038  
212-825-5900

**Release 60-2003**  
**[nyc.gov/html/doi](http://nyc.gov/html/doi)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2003**

**CONTACT: EMILY GEST**  
**(212) 825-5931**

**DOI ARRESTS NYCHA TENANT WHO POSED AS A LAWYER**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of New York City Housing Authority resident Juan R. Diaz for submitting fraudulent legal documents when he presented himself as the lawyer of an acquaintance.

Diaz, 36, a resident of NYCHA's Carver Houses located at 55 E. 99<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan, has been charged with two counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a Class E felony. If convicted, Diaz faces up to four years in prison.

DOI began its investigation after receiving a tip from the Landlord Tenant Unit of NYCHA's Law Department. DOI investigators determined that Diaz had appeared before a judge in the Housing Part of the Civil Court of the City of New York on behalf of a Carver Houses resident. The investigation also determined that Diaz filled out a document, called a "Notice of Appearance," that stated he was an attorney admitted to practice law in the State of New York and the lawyer for the Carver Houses resident.

After checking with the New York State Unified Court System's Attorney Registration Unit ("UCS"), DOI quickly determined that Diaz was neither registered nor licensed to practice law in New York State.

Diaz told investigators he pretended to be an attorney and submitted the fake documents so that he could help an acquaintance who was fighting an eviction.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked NYCHA's Law Department and Carver Houses staff for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

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 Lauren Hintz.

The Office of the Manhattan District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau, is handling the case. Assistant District Attorney Judy Salwen will prosecute.

Criminal Complaints are merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

*Get the worms out of the Big Apple. To report someone ripping off the city, call 311 or DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.*