



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #077-2000

DOI Arrests Queens Woman In Bail Refund Scam

-Tried To Get \$1,500 Refund Twice-

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2000

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of SORAIDA LEBRON, a Queens resident, for filing a City Department of Finance (DOF) affidavit falsely claiming that she had not received a \$1,500 refund check for bail she had posted for a friend.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOF's Bureau of Treasury disburses refunds to individuals, who have posted cash bail for defendants, once the defendants have been released. He noted that each month about 2,000 bail refund checks are issued, and that in 1999 about \$39 million in bail refund checks were disbursed. In the event that an eligible individual fails to receive such a check, a Forgery Claim Affidavit must be completed, in which the person attests that the check was never received and that the endorsement appearing on the original refund check was a forgery.

Commissioner Kuriansky said that DOI routinely receives copies of all Forgery Claim Affidavits filed with DOF for bail refund checks. He added that DOI began an investigation in March when a similarity was noted between LEBRON's signature on the bail refund claim form and the endorsement used to cash the original bail refund check that she claimed never to have received.

The investigation disclosed that LEBRON had posted \$1,500 bail for a friend, who had been arrested on a drug charge in Manhattan on May 3, 1999.

The investigation further revealed that LEBRON, on February 7, 2000, filed a forgery claim affidavit with DOF's Treasury Bureau at the Municipal Building on Centre Street in lower Manhattan. In that affidavit, LEBRON fraudulently asserted that she had not previously received a bail refund, when, in fact, she had received a \$1,500 DOF bail refund check on August 25, 1999, and, three days later, on August 28, 1999, had cashed the check, which was made payable to her, at CLB Check Cashing at 1139 Liberty Avenue in Brooklyn. LEBRON had endorsed the bail refund check by signing her name, and had received \$1,500 in cash from the CLB clerk.

LEBRON, 28, of 175-15 Rockaway Boulevard in Jamaica, Queens, was arrested earlier today by DOI investigators, and charged with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a Class E felony. If convicted, she faces up to 4 years in prison.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to Finance Commissioner Andrew S. Eristoff and members of his staff for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Vincent E. Green, DOI Assistant Commissioner and Inspector General for DOF, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Maureen A. Thomas, First Assistant Inspector General Jeffrey Dolcimascolo, Special Investigator Joseph Medina, and Confidential Investigator Daniel Lau.