



The City of New York
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STATEMENT FROM DOI REGARDING MAN SENTENCED TO 16 YEARS IN JAIL
--Pretended to be a City Tax Collector and Water Inspector and took advantage of the elderly--

Today, Brooklyn Supreme Court Judge James G. Starkey sentenced SHAWN M. BROWN to 16 years to life in prison.

A jury found BROWN, 54, of Brooklyn, guilty last month of Burglary in the Second and Third Degree, Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Criminal Impersonation in the Second Degree, and Scheme to Defraud in the Second Degree. After a DOI investigation, BROWN was arrested and charged in June 2005 for impersonating a City official after he told four elderly home owners that he was either a City tax collector or a water inspector for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and convinced three of them to pay him at a total of \$616. He attempted to steal money from the fourth victim.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This defendant brazenly pretended to be various City officials so that he could enter his unsuspecting elderly victims' homes and steal their money. His scams have landed him in jail, and I am pleased that justice has been served for the victims in this case."

DOI investigators and NYPD detectives jointly investigated a number of complaints from people who said that a man who claimed to be a City official (in some cases a City Marshal, in others a water or building inspector) and came into their homes and pressured them into paying money for various fictitious debts, including taxes, water charges, building violations, and rent. Most of BROWN's victims lived in Bedford Stuyvestant, Prospect Heights and East New York, in Brooklyn. His victims testified at trial.

BROWN's criminal history includes convictions for similar schemes that involved impersonating a City official and preying on the elderly. In 1994 he was sentenced to three to six years in prison after being convicted of Attempted Burglary in the Second Degree, and in 1993 he was sentenced to 18 to 54 months in prison after being convicted of Burglary in the Second Degree, among other charges.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said members of the public who think they have been a victim of this or a similar scam should call DOI at (212) 825-5959.

In addition, the public should know that:

- In general, City employees are not authorized to visit people's homes to ask for cash to perform any service or for payment of past due bills.
- Most water meters are read remotely from outside the home. DEP water use inspectors, however, may seek access without appointments for certain assignments, such as meter reading (if there is no remote or it does not work) and inspecting installations or repairs performed by DEP contractors.
- DEP water use inspectors wear uniforms and carry photo I.D. cards. Con Edison workers, who read water meters for DEP in all five boroughs, also wear uniforms and carry identification.
- Contractors installing water meters usually, but not always, make appointments in advance, wear uniforms, carry photo I.D. cards, and drive trucks bearing company identification.

- DEP air and noise inspectors and water quality investigators do not wear uniforms, but they must carry and present photo I.D. cards and DEP inspector badges. When doing tests in buildings and homes at the request of citizens, they normally make appointments in advance.
- DEP employees who respond to emergency situations, such as hazardous material spills or leaks in water and sewer systems may need to gain access to buildings or homes to determine the source of a leak. They do not wear uniforms, but must carry and present photo I.D. cards whenever requesting access to a residence or building.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Bureau of City Marshals, in particular, Special Investigator Caroline Tang-Alejandro, along with DOI's NYPD Detective Squad, and in cooperation with NYPD's Brooklyn Robbery Squad and with the assistance of the New York State Division of Parole. The Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes prosecuted the case, which was tried by Assistant District Attorney Patrick Cappock.

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 DOI at (212) 825-5959.***