



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN  
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**FIVE INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED THIS WEEK IN \$86K HOUSING FRAUD**

*-- Includes a mother and daughter, who concealed the presence of and income earned by relatives living in their respective apartments --*

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of five current and former residents of the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") for fraudulently receiving more than \$86,000 in rent subsidies for apartments in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Arrested this week were four NYCHA tenants from the Red Hook, Gravesend and Ocean Hill/Brownsville sections of Brooklyn and the Manhattan Valley section of Manhattan, and one Section 8 tenant from the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Each defendant has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, they each face up to seven years in prison.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "These defendants, along with dozens of other individuals DOI has arrested this year, have learned the perils of their greedy behavior. Housing scams do not work. DOI investigates these types of cases so that tax payers' money is not wasted and so that those who need and qualify for affordable public housing will receive it."

SHARON BENNETT-CLARKE, 39, the former tenant of record of a 4-room apartment in NYCHA's Red Hook West Houses in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, allegedly failed to report to NYCHA, from April 1995 to July 2002, the presence in her NYCHA apartment of her husband, Anthony Clark, and the income he earned (between \$45,000 to \$61,000 per year) from his employment at various local hospitals. As a result, NYCHA undercharged BENNETT-CLARKE rent and NYCHA was defrauded of \$21,293 in rental subsidies for the period April 1995 through July 2002. BENNETT-CLARKE paid NYCHA rent ranging from \$173 to \$487 a month when she should have been paying \$495 per month, the maximum rent for an apartment of that size.

MARIE BENNETT, 63, former tenant of record of a 4-room apartment in NYCHA's Marlboro Houses in the Gravesend section of Brooklyn from 1983 to 2002, is charged with unlawfully obtaining \$10,080 in rent subsidies by concealing from NYCHA, between January 1996 to March 2002, the presence in her NYCHA apartment of her son, Norman Bennett, and the income he earned as a customer service agent for Delta Airlines that ranged from \$14,000 to \$35,000 per year. In 1995, MARIE BENNETT listed on her Affidavits of Income the income that Norman, who at the time was an authorized tenant of the apartment, earned as a Delta Airlines employee. Norman's income caused MARIE BENNETT's rent to be increased from \$196 per month to \$495 per month, maximum rent for an apartment of that size. Thereafter, from 1996 to 2002, MARIE BENNETT, concealed Norman's continued presence in her apartment and the income he earned from Delta Airlines. As a result of underreporting her household size and income, MARIE BENNETT's monthly rent decreased from \$495 to anywhere between \$282 and \$437 a month. Had she accurately reported Norman's presence, MARIE BENNETT would have had to pay the maximum rent of \$495 per month.

SHARON BENNETT-CLARKE and MARIE BENNETT currently reside in a two-family home in Port Richmond, Staten Island, which was purchased in 2002 for \$224,900 by Norman Bennett, his sister SHARON and SHARON's husband, Anthony.

CHERYL CAMPBELL, 43, tenant of record of a 6-room apartment in NYCHA's Ralph Avenue Rehab (Managed by NYCHA's William Reid Houses) in the Ocean Hill/Brownsville section of Brooklyn, is charged with unlawfully obtaining \$11,727 in rent subsidies between November 1994 and March 2003, by failing to disclose on her annual Affidavits of Income for that time period, the receipt of Supplemental Security Income she received on behalf of her daughter. During the aforementioned timeframe, CAMPBELL failed to report to NYHCA the more than \$50,000 in Supplemental Security Income she received for her daughter. As a result, CAMPBELL's rent ranged from \$113 to \$350 per month when she should have been paying anywhere from \$244 to \$505 per month.

ROSA ARIAS, 49, a resident of a 5-room apartment in NYCHA's Fredrick Douglass Houses located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, is charged with unlawfully receiving \$18,936 in rental subsidies from July 1991 to July 2001. ARIAS failed to report that Pedro Arias (who once lawfully resided in the apartment and whom ARIAS claimed was her ex-husband) continued to reside in her apartment from 1990 to the present. Instead, ARIAS informed NYCHA that the couple had separated and that Pedro resided elsewhere. Even though ARIAS correctly reported the income she earned as a housekeeper at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, she failed to report that Pedro also worked for Columbia Presbyterian as a housekeeper/floor stripper and earned from \$21,449 to \$57,067 a year. As a result, ARIAS paid anywhere from \$289 to \$603 a month in rent from 1991 to 2001. If ARIAS had reported Pedro's income, she would have paid \$619 per month, the maximum rent for an apartment of that size.

YAHAIIRA CID, 31, a NYCHA Section 8 recipient of a 3-bedroom apartment in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, is charged with failing to report to NYCHA, from August 1999 through December 2002, the presence in her apartment of her children's father, Rafael Nunez, and the income he earned as a Shipping Clerk. On all of the Affidavits of Income CID submitted to NYCHA, she reported that her sole source of income derived from Public Assistance, Supplemental Security Income and her part-time employment as a babysitter and cashier. CID failed to include Nunez's income, which ranged from \$22,726 to \$32,961 per year. As a result, NYCHA overpaid anywhere from \$518 to \$717 a month in rental subsidies on CID's behalf. Nunez's income in 2001 would have made CID ineligible to receive any Section 8 benefits from September 1, 2001 through December 2002. CID's actions allegedly caused NYCHA to be defrauded of \$24,158 from August 1999 to December 2002.

These arrests are part of an ongoing City-wide crackdown by DOI and New York area prosecutors that have resulted since 1995 in the arrest of 339 residents, including 109 City, State, and Federal employees, who were charged with stealing more than \$6.6 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. So far, 244 cases have resulted in convictions and over \$3.4 million in restitution. Since January 2004 alone, 44 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving over \$695,000 in government housing benefits.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked NYCHA's Leased Housing and Brooklyn and Manhattans' Borough Management Departments for their assistance in the investigations.

These investigations were conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and NYCHA Inspector General Steven A. Pasichow and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspectors General Edward Glander and Kevin Smith, Assistant Inspector General Bergia Telesford, Special Investigator Anthony Capek and Confidential Investigator Eric Malecki. ARIAS will be prosecuted by the Office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau. The other defendants will be prosecuted by the Office of Brooklyn District Attorney Charles J. Hynes.

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.***