



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS ONE FORMER AND ONE CURRENT CITY EMPLOYEE ON CHARGES OF
DEFRAUDING CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY OF MORE THAN \$30,000**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrest of YAVETTE TAYLOR-WILSON and CECELIA FREEMAN-BURKE, both former employees of the City Human Resources Administration ("HRA"), on charges of acting in concert to illegally obtain \$33,768 in Section 8 subsidies from the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") for TAYLOR-WILSON. In addition, TAYLOR-WILSON is also charged with fraudulently collecting more than \$300 in food stamp benefits by opening a case in her name while employed at HRA in 2005. FREEMAN-BURKE is charged also with filing Affidavits of Income that falsely indicated she was residing in NYCHA housing when, in fact, she had moved out of public housing in 1997.

Both defendants were arrested, arraigned and released on their own recognizance on Tuesday, April 14, 2009. The Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the cases.

TAYLOR-WILSON, 56, and FREEMAN-BURKE, 49, both of the Bronx, have each been charged with Acting in Concert while committing various counts of the following felonies: Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, class D felonies; and Defrauding the Government, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, class E felonies.

In a separate criminal complaint, FREEMAN-BURKE has also been charged with four counts each of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, both class E felonies.

Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison, and a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison.

FREEMAN-BURKE worked at HRA from February 1981 to September 2006. In September 2006, she began employment as a NYCHA Housing Assistant and currently receives an annual salary of approximately \$42,870.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Intentionally filing false information with a City agency to steal housing and other public benefits is criminal. But these arrests are all the more troubling because municipal employees have been charged with compromising their integrity by exploiting their City access and bilking public agencies of precious resources."

According to the criminal complaint, between June 2000 and May 2008, TAYLOR-WILSON participated in NYCHA's Section 8 voucher program. Through that program, her rent in a privately-owned apartment in the Williamsbridge section of the Bronx was subsidized by NYCHA's payments to her landlord. The monthly Section 8 subsidies are determined, in part, by the tenant's household composition and income. DOI's investigation found that TAYLOR-WILSON was employed by HRA between 1994 and 2007 and earned between \$15,163 and \$34,705. In addition, the investigation found that between 2000 and 2007 another adult lived in the apartment and earned income between \$26,980 and \$40,025. However, the Affidavits of

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Income submitted by TAYLOR-WILSON failed to list the other adult and his income and underreported TAYLOR-WILSON's income.

According to the criminal complaint, DOI's investigation found that FREEMAN-BURKE, while she was an HRA employee, signed a 2004 letter TAYLOR-WILSON submitted to NYCHA that falsely indicated TAYLOR-WILSON was a per diem employee who earned \$27,675 in 2003. In addition, DOI's investigation found that while FREEMAN-BURKE's signature was on two 2005 letters TAYLOR-WILSON submitted to NYCHA falsely indicating that TAYLOR-WILSON was on unpaid medical leave and had returned to work in a limited capacity, FREEMAN-BURKE did not complete the letters.

As a result of those misrepresentations, between June 2000 and May 2005 and between September 2006 and May 2008, TAYLOR-WILSON defrauded NYCHA of approximately \$33,768 in rental subsidies, according to the criminal complaint.

In addition, according to the criminal complaint, DOI's investigation found that between January and March 2005, TAYLOR-WILSON opened a HRA case for herself and her daughter and underreported her annual income. As a result, TAYLOR-WILSON received more than \$300 in foodstamp benefits from HRA.

According to a separate criminal complaint, between April 2005 and April 2006 FREEMAN-BURKE was purportedly a resident in NYCHA's Monroe Houses in the Bronx, and she paid rent that was determined, in part, by her representations of income and household composition. DOI's investigation found that the Affidavits of Income filed by FREEMAN-BURKE with NYCHA indicated she resided in the NYCHA apartment with her two sons and her niece and that her income came from her HRA employment. However, the investigation found that FREEMAN-BURKE had moved out of the apartment in 1997.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked NYCHA Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales, HRA Commissioner Robert Doar and Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, and their staffs, for their assistance in this investigation.

These investigations were conducted by DOI's Inspector General for NYCHA Robert J. McSweeney and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Anthony Capek, Assistant Inspector General Robin Jacknow, and Confidential Investigator Martin Lintner. In addition, DOI's Inspector General for the Public Assistance and Grants Unit Pat Russo and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Margaret Shivers and Confidential Investigator Angie Wells, worked on the investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Graham Van Epps has been assigned the cases, under the supervision of Thomas D. Kapp, Chief of the Arson/Auto/Economics Crime Bureau, from the Bronx District Attorney's Office.

Criminal complaints are accusations. 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.

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