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Release #49-2010
nyc.gov/html/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2010**

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DOI STATEMENT ON GUILTY PLEA BY FORMER CITY EMPLOYEE IN THEFT OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE INFORMATION
—Defendant is fourth in eight months to plead guilty to illegal trafficking in City clients' personal information—

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on today's guilty plea by EDWARD JONES, 37, of the Bronx, to fraud in connection with identification documents, a federal offense that carries a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison. He entered his guilty plea in U.S. District Court in Manhattan before District Judge George B. Daniels and is scheduled to be sentenced on September 16, 2010.

Between 2005 and 2008, JONES, while employed as a clerk in the Office of Vital Statistics at the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH"), stole information from birth certificates and sold it to an individual who he knew would use it to obtain fraudulent identification documents, according to the indictment. JONES is the fourth defendant in the last eight months to plead guilty to a federal felony for stealing personal information from City agencies in a credit card or identity-theft scheme. The investigations were conducted by DOI and federal law enforcement officers. The office of Preet Bharara, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, prosecuted the cases.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Serious consequences await anyone who steals or fraudulently uses personal information from a City agency. Four defendants who thought City clients were easy marks have now pleaded guilty to felonies. Two are in prison, and two await sentencing. DOI has worked with the City agencies involved to strengthen their security of private information, and we will continue to work with the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York and our federal colleagues to uncover and stop these opportunistic crimes."

JONES worked as a DOHMH Clerical Aide from April 2004 to September 2007, when he received an annual salary of approximately \$28,640, and was later employed through a temporary employment agency as a clerical worker in DOHMH's Office of Vital Records until December 2008.

Three other individuals have recently pleaded guilty in similar cases in U.S. District Court in Manhattan:

- Nathaniel Robinson, 26, and Jazzrea McRae, 22, are each serving prison sentences for their roles in a scheme to steal credit card information from DOHMH's Office of Vital Records and attempt to use it for fraudulent purchases. McRae, posing as a DOHMH employee, called theft victims and asked for the security codes on their credit cards. McRae and Robinson each pleaded guilty. Robinson was sentenced in January 2010 to a two-year federal prison term and McRae was sentenced in April 2010 to five months in federal prison followed by five months of home confinement.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brent S. Wible and Loyaan A. Egal prosecuted those cases.

- Michael Wills, 59, a former Clerical Associate with the City's Human Resources Administration ("HRA"), pleaded guilty in March 2010 to aggravated identity theft for stealing copies of clients' birth certificates and social security cards from HRA and selling them to a person he believed would use them to obtain fraudulent drivers' licenses. Wills resigned from HRA in January 2010 and is expected to be sentenced in July 2010.

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DOI and the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service jointly conducted the investigations of Wills and Jones and Assistant U.S. Attorney Carrie H. Cohen has been assigned to the prosecution of these cases.

DOI Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Preet Bharara, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York; Christopher Paul, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Diplomatic Security Service of the United States Department of State; DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas A. Farley, and HRA Commissioner Robert Doar, and their staffs, for their assistance in this investigation.

DOI's Offices of Inspector General for DOHMH and HRA investigated the cases.

Criminal complaints and indictments 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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