



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

Release #56-2007
nyc.gov/html/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JULY 2, 2007**

**CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931**

**DOI ARRESTS WOMAN FOR ALLEGEDLY OBTAINING MORE THAN \$10,000
IN FEDERAL HOUSING SUBSIDIES, WHICH SHE WAS NOT ENTITLED TO RECEIVE**
***--DOI investigation found woman was living in Wappingers Falls, N.Y.
while receiving Section 8 benefits for Bronx apartment--***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of TONYA WHITENING (WHITENING) for allegedly defrauding the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of about \$10,982 in housing subsidies between July 2003 and October 2005, according to the Criminal Complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan.

WHITENING, 45, of Wappingers Falls, N.Y., has been charged with Theft of Public Funds. If convicted, she faces up to 10 years in prison.

DOI began its investigation after learning that the Section 8 subsidized apartment in the Bronx that WHITENING was supposed to be residing in was being sublet to another individual. DOI determined that the individual had been subletting the apartment for two years and that WHITENING did not reside at the apartment during that time.

DOI's investigation determined that WHITENING was actually living in the Dutchess County community of Wappingers Falls, N.Y., while the government was paying Section 8 benefits towards the rent for the Bronx apartment. The investigation also determined that WHITENING was listed as an "other resident" and, later, as a tenant at a Wappingers Falls residence even though she told the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) that she had moved into the Section 8 residence in the Bronx as of December 2002. Again, in 2005, WHITENING indicated to HPD that she and her two children were the sole occupants of the Section 8 residence in the Bronx, according to the Criminal Complaint.

According to the Criminal Complaint, WHITENING admitted that she allowed another individual, and the individual's children, to reside in the Bronx apartment in which she received Section 8 subsidies. WHITENING indicated that individual paid the rent for the apartment and that when WHITENING traveled from the Wappingers Falls residence to the Bronx, WHITENING did not stay in the Section 8 apartment.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This individual is accused of devising a scheme that allowed her to wrongfully receive more than \$10,000 of federal housing subsidies, which were earmarked to help the disadvantaged. This arrest should be a warning to any individual who thinks that obtaining housing benefits they're not entitled to will allow them to successfully scam the system. This case follows a series of state and federal arrests DOI has been involved in this year targeting housing subsidy fraud in New York City. DOI and the government will remain vigilant on this issue."

The HPD administers some of New York City's Section 8 rental assistance program, which is regulated and funded by HUD. As part of the Section 8 program, HUD pays subsidies for people to live in private housing of the tenant's choosing, provided that the housing fits the requirements of the Section 8 program. HUD sends funds to HPD and HPD in turn pays the Section 8 housing subsidy directly to the landlord where the participating tenant lives. The tenant then pays the difference between the rent charged by the landlord and the amount of the Section 8 subsidy.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York Michael J. Garcia, whose office is prosecuting the case. It has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee Renzin.

This investigation was conducted by DOI's Deputy Commissioner Vincent E. Green, and members of his staff including First Deputy Inspector General Francis A. Sinatra and Investigator Brooke Toner.

Criminal complaints are merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and 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 DOI at (212) 825-5959.**