



The City of New York
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DOI RECOVERS \$17.5 MILLION FOR NEW YORK CITY

— Estate of defendant in a criminal case pays \$17.6 million in restitution —

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation, announced today that the City has recovered \$17,597,842 from the estate of ALBERT SCHUSSLER, a defendant in a Federal racketeering, bribery and mail fraud case against 18 current and former New York City tax assessors. SCHUSSLER and his codefendants were arrested in February 2002 for developing a profitable criminal enterprise that cost the City at least \$160 million in reduced property tax assessments.

SCHUSSLER, the mastermind of the scheme, was a former tax assessor, who, for 35 years, worked in the private sector representing property owners, who paid him substantial fees for his ability to reduce the real estate taxes on their properties. The investigation revealed that SCHUSSLER, directly and through middlemen, paid a total of \$10 million in bribes to influence Department of Finance assessors to undervalue 562 properties of his clients to reduce their real estate taxes. SCHUSSLER died on January 6, 2003, while criminal charges were still pending against him. After his death, the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York commenced a civil action seeking forfeiture of SCHUSSLER's assets that were traceable to the bribery scheme he masterminded. DOI assisted the United States Attorney with this action, which resulted in the forfeiture of \$17,597,842 to the United States Department of Justice, which, in turn, turned the money over to DOI.

Seventeen of SCHUSSLER's codefendants have been convicted of charges relating to the bribery scheme. Each of the 14 defendants sentenced thus far have been ordered to pay \$160 million in restitution to the City. Thus far, the City has collected approximately \$377,000 in restitution from these defendants. As of today, the City has received nearly \$18 million in restitution.

"This case was extraordinarily difficult to investigate and I am thrilled with DOI's efforts, as well as the results of DOI's work with Manhattan Federal prosecutors and the FBI. Not only did we succeed in obtaining 17 guilty pleas, we have recovered nearly \$18 million in restitution for the City. Today's check goes a long way to helping the City recover from this cynical and selfish scheme by which current and former City employees enriched themselves at the expense of taxpayers."

Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked United States Deputy Attorney General James Comey, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York David N. Kelley, and Assistant United States Attorneys Sharon McCarthy, Lawrence Gerschwer, and Jane Levine, as well as Special Agent Rodney Miller and his colleagues at the FBI for their excellent work on the criminal and civil cases. Commissioner Gill Hearn also thanked the Law Department for its assistance.

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.