



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS HANDYMAN FOR STEALING FROM BRONX PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of ISRAEL "JOHN" RIVERA, a contractor for the Bronx Public Administrator's (PA's) Office, for stealing more than \$3,000 from the Bronx PA's Office. RIVERA, 55, of the Bronx, has been indicted on charges of Grand Larceny in the Third and Fourth Degrees and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property. If convicted of the top charge, he faces a maximum of seven years in prison.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This well-paid handyman 'cleaned up' by stealing. He and others like him now know that DOI will make every effort to protect not only the City's money but also funds belonging to people who can't protect themselves. DOI will make every effort to recover for the estates the money lost to the defendant's scheme."

Between 1998 and 2003 the Bronx PA's Office paid RIVERA, a local handyman, more than \$389,000 to inspect, clean, and repair houses and apartments whose owners had died without wills or relatives able to administer their estates. DOI's investigation revealed that for part of that time RIVERA also operated "Bronx Vintage," a second-hand/antique store located at 40 Bruckner Boulevard. In 2001 and 2002, RIVERA, as a representative of the Bronx PA's Office, rented a number of trash containers from private carting companies, paying for them with Bronx PA checks, totaling more than \$11,000, drawn from the funds of several estates. To obtain those checks, RIVERA told the Bronx PA's office that he needed trash containers at the estates' properties to dispose of the trash and debris that he was removing from them. But one carting company's records show that RIVERA, while paying for all of the containers with PA checks, told the company to deliver some of the containers not to the estates that were being charged for them, but to other locations, including his store. RIVERA is charged with stealing more than \$3,000 from the Bronx PA by using the estates' money to pay for containers that RIVERA rented for his own purposes.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Public Administrators' Offices, including Assistant Inspector General Pamela Woolbright, Chief Auditor Floralba Paulino, Deputy Inspectors General Joseph Medina and Joan Russell-Benjamin, and Investigative Auditor Pauline Ho. Office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case, which is assigned to Assistant District Attorney Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor, under the supervision of Richard O. Baker, Chief of the Arson and Economic Crimes Bureau.

Criminal charges are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*Get the worms out of the Big Apple.*  
*To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.*