



The City of New York
Department of Investigation
ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

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

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

**DOI STATEMENT ON BRONX INDICTMENT OF ACCUSED CON MAN
CHARGED WITH POSING AS A CITY-SANCTIONED INSPECTIONAL CONSULTANT
– Defendant pleaded guilty earlier this month to similar charges in Manhattan –**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), issued the following statement on the indictment of HECTOR COLLET, charged with posing as a City contractor and tricking four Bronx hair and nail salons into paying him fees of \$60 to \$150 each, supposedly to help them prepare for health inspections. The City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”) has no such contracts, and the credentials COLLET presented were forged, according to the 19-count indictment obtained by the office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson. DOI began its investigation after DOHMH, the New York State Department of State’s Division of Licensing Services, and the New York State Department of Agriculture forwarded complaints about the scam.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “This impostor gambled that no one would catch on that he was using City health inspections as a ruse to shake down small business owners. But that bad bet won him only a mountain of trouble, namely, a criminal conviction in Manhattan followed by an indictment in the Bronx. Because City and State employees immediately relayed the allegations to DOI, investigators exposed and shut down the con. This case is an ideal example of the dividends of cooperation among DOI, prosecutors, and public employees.”

In February 2010, COLLET, 41, of the Bronx, was charged in Manhattan with duping three small business operators into paying him cash for “pre-inspections” purportedly under a DOHMH contract. Earlier this month, on June 9, 2010, COLLET pleaded guilty in Manhattan Criminal Court to Criminal Possession of Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, before Judge Carol Berkman, and he faces between two and six years in prison when he is sentenced on Wednesday, June 23, 2010. The office of New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., prosecuted the case. DOI’s press release on this case can be found at the following link:
http://www.nyc.gov/html/doi/downloads/pdf/pr04collet_020310.pdf.

COLLET was arraigned today, June 22, 2010, in Bronx Criminal Court, on five counts each of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and Identity Theft in the First Degree, class D felonies, and five counts of Criminal Impersonation in the Second Degree and four counts of Petit Larceny, class A misdemeanors. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a class A misdemeanor by up to a year’s incarceration.

According to the Bronx indictment, between August and November 2009, COLLET went to a hair salon, a barber shop and three nail salons in the Bronx and misrepresented himself as an individual from an organization known as AHRC that he said was subcontracted by DOHMH to conduct “pre-inspections.” COLLET presented an AHRC identification card and a letter purporting to be from DOHMH indicating that AHRC was a subcontractor of DOHMH. COLLET charged the businesses between \$60 and \$150 for the pre-inspections and gave them receipts. One of the business operators refused to pay.

DOI’s investigation found that an AHRC employee whose name was on the identification card presented by COLLET had lost his identification card sometime around March 2009; that the purported letter from DOHMH presented by COLLET was a fake; and that DOHMH does not contract with anyone to conduct pre-inspections of

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businesses. AHRC is an organization that provides services under contract with DOHMH to individuals with developmental disabilities and has nothing to do with inspections.

Assistant District Attorney Robert Caliendo of the Rackets Bureau of the Bronx County District Attorney's Office is assigned to the prosecution of the case.

DOI Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson; New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas A. Farley; New York State Department of Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker; New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez; the New York State Department of State's Division of Licensing Services; AHRC Executive Director Michael Goldfarbe; and their staffs, for their assistance in this investigation.

DOI's Office of Inspector General for DOHMH investigated the case, including Inspector General Christopher Staackmann, Deputy Inspector General Stephan Zander and Special Investigator Danielle Caruso.

An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is 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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