



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

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

Release #54-2011
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2011

CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

DOI ARRESTS SIX INDIVIDUALS ON CHECK FRAUD CHARGES INVOLVING NEARLY \$40,000 IN THEFT

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI") announced today the arrest of six individuals on charges of stealing a total of \$38,326 – ranging in amounts between approximately \$1,360 and \$8,400 – in a variety of fraudulent schemes, most involving checks issued or purportedly issued by City agencies. The arrests began in June 2011, with the most recent arrest late yesterday, September 8, 2011. DOI's investigations uncovered thefts that included City-issued checks for bail refunds, a property tax refund, and rent subsidies and counterfeit checks made to appear that they were issued by the City and a private day care center. DOI's investigations began after the City Department of Finance ("DOF") and the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") reported check fraud allegations. The cases are being prosecuted by the offices of New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown, Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, and Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "A person who fraudulently cashes a City check will face criminal prosecution. As these cases demonstrate, City agencies are vigilant about reviewing cashed checks and referring irregularities to DOI where investigators will expose any crimes. I thank our fellow City agencies and the District Attorneys for helping us protect public funds."

The following are details from the arrests as outlined in the criminal complaints:

- MARIA BARBOSA, 39, of the Bronx, was arrested Thursday, September 8, 2011, and charged with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, class E felonies. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison. The New York County District Attorney's Office is prosecuting the case.

According to the criminal complaint, in August 2010 the defendant submitted to the City Department of Finance ("DOF") an affidavit falsely stating she did not receive a bail refund check in the amount of \$2,000. DOI's investigation found the defendant had actually cashed the bail refund check at a check-cashing establishment in the Bronx in June 2010.

- DARLENE WADE, and STEPHANIE SANTIAGO, both 20-years-old and from Brooklyn, were separately arrested in June 2011 and charged with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the First Degree, a class C felony, and Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony. Upon conviction, a class C felony is punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a class D felony by up to seven years in prison. Assistant District Attorneys Evan Gotlob and Jason Trager of the Queens County District Attorney's Office are prosecuting the cases, which are pending in court.

According to the criminal complaints, in April 2010, SANTIAGO deposited a fake \$5,600 check that purported to have been issued by a private day care facility into her bank account. DOI's investigation determined the check was fraudulent, that the day care facility owner had never issued or endorsed the check, and that SANTIAGO knowingly deposited the fraudulent check in exchange for \$1,000 that was promised to her by another individual. In May 2010, WADE deposited a fraudulent check purportedly issued by DOHMH for \$8,400 into her bank account, and the defendant also deposited another fraudulent check

more

for \$7,100 purportedly from the same private day care facility SANTIAGO is charged with defrauding. DOI's investigation determined both checks deposited by WADE were fraudulent.

- ASSAF R. HOOSEIN, 53, of Queens, was arrested in June 2011 and charged with Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree. In July 2011, he pleaded guilty to Disorderly Conduct, a violation, and agreed to pay \$2,362 in restitution. Assistant District Attorney Naomi Schneidmill from the Queens County District Attorney's Office prosecuted the case.

According to the criminal complaint, in May 2008 the defendant contacted the City Department of Homeless Services ("DHS") and stated he had not received his monthly rent subsidy check for two months. DOI's investigation found DHS requested stopped payment on the two checks mailed to the defendant in the amount of \$1,316, the defendant was verbally informed of that action, and subsequently two replacement checks were mailed to the defendant. The investigation determined that the defendant cashed the stopped checks and one of the replacement checks, each valued at \$1,316, at a check cashing establishment in Queens. The second replacement check was cashed by the defendant's wife.

- RAINA MUSTAPHER, 41, of the Bronx, was arrested in July 2011 and charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree, and Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, all felonies, and related class A misdemeanors. Assistant District Attorney Jessica Deanna Lupo of the Bronx County District Attorney's Office is prosecuting the case, which is pending in court.

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, the defendant cashed a City-issued check made payable to a property management company in the amount of \$8,014 for a property tax refund. DOI's investigation determined the property management company did not receive the tax refund, and in May 2010 the check was deposited into the defendant's bank account and the defendant made withdrawals on the account.

- ANDREA CLARK, 35, was arrested in August 2011, and charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, class D felonies, and Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree, class E felonies, and related class A misdemeanors. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison. Assistant District Attorney Karen Turner from the Kings County District Attorney's Office is prosecuting the case, which is pending in court.

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, in August 2010 the defendant cashed a DOF-issued check for \$4,850 made payable to another individual for a bail refund, used some of the money to pay for tuition, and kept the remainder of the cash. The investigation determined the endorsement on the check was forged.

Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked DOF Commissioner David Frankel, DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley, DHS Commissioner Seth Diamond, New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown, Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, and Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes, and their staffs, for their assistance in this investigation.

These cases were investigated by DOI's Office of Inspector General for DOF and DOHMH.

Criminal complaints 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.

**DOI's press releases can also be found at twitter.com/doinews
Get the worms out of the Big Apple. To report someone ripping off the City, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.**