



The City of New York
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UNLICENSED DAY CARE OPERATOR IS ARRESTED FOR IMPERSONATING A LICENSEE
Accused impostor's license was revoked in 2009 after two children were injured

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today that a DOI investigation, conducted with the assistance of the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH"), found that a 33-year-old woman whose license to operate a day care program was revoked fraudulently used another woman's identity and license to run a day care program in her Bronx apartment for approximately one year. Desiree Carpio had once been licensed as a day care operator, but her license was suspended and revoked in December 2009 after two children suffered injuries, including a broken leg, when she left them in the care of her boyfriend. The boyfriend went to prison for felony assault in that case. As a result of the current investigation, Carpio's fraudulent day care program was shut down last month, and Carpio was arrested today by DOI investigators.

DOI interviewed witnesses and reviewed relevant documents as part of its investigation and has referred its findings to the office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson and DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley. A copy of DOI's report is attached.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "The care and safety of children in our City is paramount. An individual who evades day care regulations through fraud puts children at risk and will face criminal prosecution. City procedures revealed this deceptive scheme and shut it down."

This investigation began in August 2012, after a City marshal notified DOI that she had been asked to schedule a court-ordered eviction of Carpio at an apartment on West 175th Street in the Bronx that housed a children's day care program. (City marshals notify DOI and take precautions before conducting any eviction involving a children's day care program.) DOI advised DOHMH of the prospective eviction, and a DOHMH employee noted that Carpio was not the licensed day care operator at the apartment and that Carpio's previous license, at a different address, had been revoked three years earlier. The DOHMH employee immediately contacted the day care operator, who identified herself as "Karina Lopez," the licensee, and said that Carpio no longer resided in the apartment. "Lopez" also said that she would go to court to stop the eviction. On Friday, August 10, 2012, a DOHMH inspector visited the apartment to ensure that "Lopez" would not have children present if the eviction went forward. The inspector asked the individual claiming to be Lopez, later identified as Carpio, for identification and the apartment lease, but was told they were not available. A DOHMH inspector returned the next business day, Monday, August 13. Carpio continued to pose as Lopez and signed a written statement claiming to be Lopez. The inspector conducted further inquiries with building management, and determined that Carpio was actually operating the day care. The following day DOHMH directed Carpio to cease operation and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services suspended Lopez's license and directed Carpio to refrain from operating any children's day care program. DOHMH then reported the matter to DOI and assisted in the ensuing investigation.

DOI's investigation found that Carpio, not Lopez, was operating the day care program during 2011, had signed Lopez's name on various documents submitted to DOHMH between February and June 2012, and identified herself as Lopez to a DOHMH inspector in June 2012. DOI also found that Lopez had not been operating the day care program from at least September 2011 through mid-August 2012.

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When Carpio's scheme was uncovered, 10 children were enrolled in the day care program at the West 175th Street location. The children ranged in age from infancy to nearly five years old.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas A. Farley, City Marshal Darlene Barone, and their staffs, for their cooperation and assistance in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOHMH, with the assistance of DOHMH.

Arrest charges and criminal complaints are accusations. 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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Get the worms out of the Big Apple. To report someone ripping off the City, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.



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September 17, 2012

Dr. Thomas Farley, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
42-09 28th Street, WS 8-59
Queens, NY 11101

Dear Commissioner Farley:

On August 15, 2012, the Department of Investigation (“DOI”) received an allegation from New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”) Early Childhood Education Consultant Kkuumba Mhanneh that Desiree Carpio had assumed the identity of her cousin, Karina Lopez, so that Carpio could operate a family day care licensed in Lopez’s name. During the course of our ensuing investigation, DOI determined that Carpio knowingly misrepresented herself in this manner to DOHMH on several occasions since September 2011, after Lopez went to Puerto Rico for an extended period.

Revocation of Desiree Carpio’s DOHMH Day Care License in 2009

According to files that DOI obtained from DOHMH, Carpio previously operated a different licensed family day care, named “Desiree Carpio,” located at 2985 Botanical Square, in the Bronx. On December 1, 2009, the New York City Administration for Children Services (“ACS”) notified DOHMH that on November 30, 2009, twin eleven-month old infants suffered injuries while in the care of Carpio’s day care. Carpio’s boyfriend, Matthew Barbara, was arrested in connection with these injuries.¹ The infants were subsequently taken to a hospital,

¹ In his statement to police officers, Barbara stated that he had placed the two infants on the floor in front of the television, and then left the apartment to smoke marijuana and a cigarette. According to Barbara, when he came back into the apartment building, he “accidentally” hit one of the infants with the door. Barbara told police officers that he also “slipped and fell” on water and landed on top of both infants. However, an examining doctor found that the infants’ injuries were not consistent with Barbara’s accounts.

where a doctor determined that the infants had bruises and abrasions on their faces, and that one infant had suffered a fractured and swollen leg. ACS completed an incident report regarding the infants' injuries. On December 2, 2009, as a result of the ACS notification, DOHMH inspectors conducted an inspection of the day care. Carpio admitted to the DOHMH inspectors that she had left the infants alone with Barbara, who was not approved by DOHMH to care for children.²

After Barbara's arrest, the Bronx County District Attorney's Office subsequently charged and convicted him on a felony assault charge for which he served 18 months in prison. The Bronx County District Attorney's Office did not ultimately charge Carpio with any crimes relating to this injury, but on December 15, 2009, DOHMH suspended and revoked Carpio's day care license. As a result of the ACS report, DOHMH has since prohibited Carpio from operating any day care.

Desiree Carpio's Impersonation of a DOHMH Licensed Day Care Operator

Upon being licensed by DOHMH in April 2011, the day care in question, "Karina Lopez," operated out of Carpio's home, which is located at 135 West 175th Street in the Bronx. In her license application, submitted to DOHMH in January 2011, Lopez indicated that she lived at this address. However, on August 13, 2012, Carpio admitted to DOHMH inspectors that Lopez subsequently left for Puerto Rico in September 2011, at which time Carpio began to hold herself out as Lopez. Carpio admitted that she previously told DOHMH inspectors that she was Lopez on more than one occasion. She said that she did so in order to be able to continue to maintain the day care. On August 14, 2012, the New York State Office of Children & Family Services suspended and revoked the license of "Karina Lopez."

On August 24, 2012, DOI interviewed Carpio, who admitted to having assumed the identity of Lopez in order to maintain the day care, "Karina Lopez," starting in September 2011, when Lopez went to Puerto Rico. Carpio admitted that she signed Lopez's name on several documents that were submitted to DOHMH. Carpio acknowledged that she had assumed Lopez's identity because she was unable to legally operate a day care herself.

Earlier today, DOI arrested Carpio, and our findings have been referred to the Bronx County District Attorney's Office for consideration of criminal charges.

DOI is forwarding this matter to you for whatever action you deem appropriate. In addition, among the recommendations that we will make as a result of this investigation, we hereby recommend that DOHMH require applicants to provide information about the location of their day care center(s) (e.g., in the case of a rental, a copy of the relevant lease or sublease; in the case of an owned home, a copy of the deed) so that appropriate background checks may be conducted.

Please contact us if you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter. Furthermore, we would appreciate if you would notify us regarding the above-mentioned policy and procedure recommendation.

² According to Carpio, she had left the day care for approximately one hour while she picked up the "after school" children for whom she also cared at the day care.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your agency's timely referral of this information, and for your staff's assistance in pulling and providing the day care's files so expeditiously. Ms. Mhanneh's attention to detail and her tenacity in refusing to accept Carpio's statements at face value were particularly helpful to this investigation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CBT' with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Melissa Ballard
Christopher Gretina
Inspectors General

cc: James Morriss, Director, Field Operations and Regulatory Enforcement, DOHMH