



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**FORMER DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS CASHIER PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF MORE THAN \$50,000
FROM CUSTOMERS AT DOB'S BROOKLYN BOROUGH OFFICE**

Margaret Garnett, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on the guilty plea of DEVAUGHN MORRIS, a former Supervising Cashier at the Brooklyn Borough Office of the New York City Department of Buildings ("DOB"), on charges of allegedly stealing more than \$50,000 in a series of intricate financial transactions involving altering, deleting, and creating DOB records. The investigation began after DOI received a complaint of an unwanted cancellation of payment processed by DOB's Brooklyn Borough Office without the customer's knowledge. It was followed by additional cancellations of payment that DOB's Fiscal Department brought to DOI's attention. The Office of New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., is prosecuting the case.

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, "The defendant used his supervisory role and unfettered access to DOB financial systems to mask tens of thousands of dollars in theft, by creating a maze of alterations to existing records and also creating new records, all with the goal of concealing his stealing from both DOB customers and from the City, according to the charges. DOI thanks the New York District Attorney's Office for its partnership and prosecution of this charged conduct and the Department of Buildings for its cooperation and assistance in this matter."

MORRIS, 38, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was arrested on February 1, 2019 and charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, Tampering with Public Records in the First Degree, a class D felony, and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a class E felony. Upon conviction, a class C felony is punishable by up to 15 years in prison, a class D felony by up to seven years in prison and a class E felony by up to four years in prison. MORRIS pleaded guilty today, February 26, 2019, to Grand Larceny in the Second Degree in Manhattan Criminal Court before Judge Laurie Peterson, and received 500 hours of community service.

MORRIS began working at DOB as a Supervising Cashier in 2005 and received an annual salary of \$63,641. In January 2017, MORRIS was selected from the New York City Civil Service List for an Administrative Staff Analyst position with the City Department of Homeless Services ("DHS") and currently receives an annual salary of \$76,220. MORRIS was suspended by DHS upon his arrest.

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, between March 4, 2016 and December 23, 2016, MORRIS stole approximately \$54,000 from DOB in cash and money orders through his position as a Supervising Cashier accepting payments to DOB in the Brooklyn Borough Office, and falsified DOB records in an attempt to hide his theft. MORRIS used various schemes to cover up his theft, including telling customers he would fill out the payee section of money orders for them, instead entering his own name and depositing the money orders in his personal bank account. MORRIS also canceled customers' transactions and used their payments to cover other transactions from which he had already stolen. MORRIS also used his supervisory access to DOB systems to change forms of payments on invoices that were already provided to customers to cover up his conduct.

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Commissioner Garnett thanked New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., and his staff, for their partnership on this investigation and the prosecution of the case. Commissioner Garnett also thanked Acting DOB Commissioner Thomas Fariello and City Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks, and their staffs, for their assistance and cooperation in this matter.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Buildings, specifically Investigative Auditor Syed Ali Ameer, under the supervision of Inspector General Gregory Cho, Associate Commissioner Jay Flaherty, Deputy Commissioner / Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort.

The case is being prosecuted by the New York County District Attorney's Office, specifically Assistant District Attorney Rachana Pathak, under the supervision of Jodie Kane, Chief of the Rackets Bureau.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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 strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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