



**CYRUS R. VANCE JR.,
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Emily Tuttle, tuttle@dany.nyc.gov

**D.A. VANCE, DOI ANNOUNCE CHARGES AGAINST DOC OFFICERS WHO ILLEGALLY STRIP
SEARCHED WOMEN VISITING MANHATTAN DETENTION COMPLEX**

DOI Issues Report Analyzing DOC Staff Methodology, Assessing Potential Changes to DOC Policy and Training

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., and New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”) Commissioner Margaret Garnett today announced the indictment of LESLIE-ANN ABSALOM, 53, a former Department of Correction (“DOC”) Captain, as well as DOC Officers DAPHNE FARMER, 49, JENNIFER GEORGE, 32, LISETTE RODRIGUEZ, 51, ALIFA WAITERS, 45, and LATOYA SHUFORD, 36, for performing unlawful searches of visitors to the Manhattan Detention Complex (“MDC”) and filing false paperwork to conceal their illegal conduct. The defendants are charged in a New York State Supreme Court indictment with Official Misconduct, Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, and Conspiracy in the Sixth Degree, as well as various counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, and one count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree.^[1]

D.A. Vance said: “There is no excuse for violating the human rights of New Yorkers visiting our City’s jails. As alleged, these officers flagrantly abused their power when they ignored their training and subjected visitors to humiliating and unlawful searches. Further, they attempted to cover up their actions by forcing visitors to sign consent forms under false pretenses, and repeatedly lying in official documents. I would like to thank DOI for its partnership, and urge DOC to act quickly to adopt and implement the recommendations contained in DOI’s report.”

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said: “Stopping contraband before it enters the City’s jails is of paramount importance, but it cannot be done at the expense of visitors’ dignity, the law, and the

Correction Department's rules. Working with the Manhattan District Attorney, DOI exposed the criminal conduct that led to improper, invasive searches by City Correction Officers, who then tried to cover up their misconduct by falsifying records, according to the indictment. Protecting the rights of visitors to the City's jails does not impede the ability to control the flow of contraband and we are pleased that the City Department of Correction sees the value in the recommendations DOI has issued in connection with this investigation. DOI thanks the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for its valued partnership and prosecution of these alleged crimes."

According to court documents and statements made on the record in court, the defendants were assigned to the MDC visit area, where they were responsible for enforcing the DOC Directive on Inmate Visit Procedures. The Directive dictates how officers conduct "pat frisk" searches of visitors when they are suspected of possessing contraband, and requires that officers obtain the written consent of visitors before a search is conducted. If a visitor does not consent, he or she may leave voluntarily, DOC officers may offer visitors a "non-contact booth visit," or officers may deny visitors a visit. Instead, the defendants routinely strip searched female visitors, including forcing visitors to remove their pants and underwear, touching visitors' breasts, and examining visitors' vaginal and buttocks areas. In order to justify their unlawful searches, defendants GEORGE, RODRIGUEZ, WAITERS, and ABSALOM filed false paperwork with DOC and the Manhattan D.A.'s Office, leading to the arrest of three visitors whose charges were based on illegal searches.

In coordination with today's arrests, DOI issued a report that examined DOC staff's methodology in conducting searches to determine whether correction officers were complying with DOC's directives, and assess whether further changes to DOC's policies, practices, or training were warranted. DOI's full report can be found [here](#).

Assistant D.A.s Emily Farber and Michael Mulanaphy are handling the prosecution of this case under the supervision of Assistant D.A.s Julio Cuevas, Jr., Deputy Chief of the Public Corruption Unit, and Luke Rettler, Chief of the Public Corruption Unit, as well as Executive Assistant D.A. Michael Sachs, Chief of the Investigation Division. Investigative Analyst Benjamin Drachman and Senior Rackets Investigator Christo Christonikos also assisted with the case.

District Attorney Vance thanked DOI, including Special Investigator Lawrence Bond and Confidential Investigators Alethea Cruz, Kathryn Kifner and Gregory Mangini, under the supervision of Inspector General Dana A. Roth, Associate Commissioner Paul Cronin, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort.

Defendant Information:

LESLIE-ANN ABSALOM, D.O.B. 1/8/1966

Brooklyn, NY

Charges:

- Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, two counts
- Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, four counts
- Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, two counts
- Conspiracy in the Sixth Degree, a class B misdemeanor, one count

DAPHNE FARMER, D.O.B. 4/19/70

Manhattan, NY

Charges:

- Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, five counts
- Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, five counts
- Conspiracy in the Sixth Degree, a class B misdemeanor, one count

JENNIFER GEORGE, D.O.B. 8/4/1986

Brooklyn, NY

Charges:

- Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, six counts
- Making a Punishable False Written Statement, a class A misdemeanor, two counts
- Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, four counts
- Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, four counts
- Conspiracy in the Sixth Degree, a class B misdemeanor, one count

LISETTE RODRIGUEZ, D.O.B. 8/13/67

Bronx, NY

Charges:

- Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, one count
- Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, one count

- Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, five counts
- Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, five counts
- Conspiracy in the Sixth Degree, a class B misdemeanor, one count

LATOYA SHUFORD, D.O.B. 1/11/1983

Manhattan, NY

Charges:

- Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, one count
- Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, one count
- Conspiracy in the Sixth Degree, a class B misdemeanor, one count

ALIFA WAITERS, D.O.B. 2/13/1974

Orange County, NY

Charges:

- Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, two counts
- Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor, three counts
- Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor, three counts
- Conspiracy in the Sixth Degree, a class B misdemeanor, one count

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