



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER AT CITY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF A FAKE PARKING PLACARD**

Margaret Garnett, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. jointly announced today that an Assistant Commissioner with the City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (“HPD”) was arraigned on charges of possession of a fraudulent parking placard and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license. VIVIAN LOUIE, Assistant Commissioner of Property Management and Client Services at HPD, had an alleged photocopied fraudulent parking placard in the dashboard of her vehicle while parked in a space in Manhattan and the defendant acknowledged to investigators the placard was fake, according to the criminal complaint. DOI began its investigation after receiving a referral from HPD’s Disciplinary Director indicating a potentially fraudulent placard was in the window of a vehicle parked near HPD’s headquarters in Manhattan. The Office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. is prosecuting the case.

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, “DOI is committed to investigating abuses of parking placards and holding public officials accountable for attempting to manipulate a system that is meant to assist City employees in their service to the public. This defendant, a high-level City employee, allegedly used a photocopy of an original Department of Transportation-issued placard to park her car, while legally restricted from even operating her vehicle because of an outstanding summons, according to the charges. DOI thanks the New York County District Attorney’s Office for their assistance in this matter.”

VIVIAN LOUIE, 48, of Queens, N.Y., is charged with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, and Aggravated Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle in the Third Degree, a misdemeanor under the Vehicle and Traffic Law. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison and this violation under the Vehicle and Traffic Law is a misdemeanor punishable by up to a \$500 fine, or imprisonment of up to 30 days, or both a fine and imprisonment. LOUIE was arraigned today in New York County Criminal Court before Judge Nicholas Moyne and pled not guilty to the charges. LOUIE is due back in court on January 7, 2021.

LOUIE has been employed by HPD since April 2007 and earns an annual salary of approximately \$148,000. HPD has been informed of LOUIE’s arrest.

According to the criminal complaint and DOI’s investigation, on March 6, 2020, at approximately 5:10 p.m. in front of 8 Spruce St. in Manhattan, a DOI investigator saw the fraudulent parking placard in the window of a 1998 Toyota Rav4 while the vehicle was parked in a metered space. The placard appeared to be photocopied and did not have the City Department of Transportation (“DOT”) holographic emblem that appears on genuinely issued placards, according to the charges. In addition, LOUIE told a DOI investigator in substance that the placard was fake.

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Upon checking the defendant's vehicle with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, the DOI investigator found that LOUIE's license had been suspended for failure to answer a summons and had not been reinstated.

Commissioner Garnett thanked New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Louise Carroll and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. for their cooperation and assistance in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for HPD, specifically Special Investigators Nokonyon Soumahoro-Ali and Raymond Li, under the supervision of Inspector General Jessica Heegan, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella, and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort with assistance from the NYPD Squad of Detectives assigned to DOI.

The case is being prosecuted by the Office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., specifically Assistant District Attorney Rachana Pathak, Supervising Attorney of the Rackets Bureau.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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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