



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI STATEMENT ON TWO DEFENDANTS IN \$5.4 MILLION SCHEME
TO DEFRAUD NYC HOMELESS VETERANS SENTENCED TO PRISON**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced today the sentencing of RUDEAN WEIR, 37, of Atlanta, Georgia, and JEROME WEAH, 46, of Trenton, New Jersey, for their involvement in a \$5.4 million scheme to defraud a program of the New York City Human Resources Administration (“HRA”) that provides cash assistance to homeless veterans of the United States armed services seeking permanent housing. WEIR and WEAH pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud in December and January, respectively. On March 30, 2023, WEIR was sentenced by United States District Judge Denise L. Cote in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York to 30 months in prison and three years’ supervised release and ordered to forfeit six properties WEIR owns in Georgia. Today, WEAH was sentenced by Judge Cote to 46 months in prison and three years’ supervised release and ordered to forfeit his property in New Jersey. Both were ordered to pay a total of \$5,388,769.60 in restitution.

DOI investigated this case with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Inspector General-Criminal Investigation Division, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York, which prosecuted the case.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “The defendants stole millions of taxpayer dollars by abusing New York City’s Enhanced One-Shot Deal program, which was designed to help homeless veterans find permanent residences. They went to great lengths to concoct phony landlord-tenant agreements in the names of veterans, who never signed any paperwork and often didn’t even live in the City. Their prison sentences send a strong message to those who would defraud the City of precious public funds intended to help those in need. I thank the City’s Department of Social Services for alerting DOI to the scheme and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York and the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for their partnership in ensuring a successful prosecution of this case.”

According to the criminal complaint, from October 2020 to May 2022, WEIR and WEAH submitted more than 340 fraudulent applications to HRA for housing assistance payments from the Enhanced One-Shot Deal (“EOSD”) program, a one-time cash assistance program aimed at helping military veterans pay rent, broker fees and other costs. EOSD payments often are used to help individuals move out of homeless shelters or other temporary housing into permanent housing. WEIR and WEAH submitted fraudulent applications on behalf of veterans, who in some cases provided the defendants with their detailed personal information with the belief their information would be used to obtain COVID-19 relief funds.

Fraudulent EOSD applications reviewed by DOI included a purported lease agreement with a landlord (“Landlord-1”) and forms requesting payment to that landlord and a broker (“Broker Company-1”). The investigation found that the lease agreements in fact had not been signed by the veterans and Landlord-1

and that Broker Company-1 did not provide any services to the veterans. The scheme was aided by forged identification cards using the likenesses of unwitting brokers licensed by New York State.

In most cases, HRA issued three checks to Landlord-1, Broker Company-1 and the veteran named on a particular application. HRA made EOSD payments of at least \$5.4 million in connection with these fraudulent EOSD applications. The checks were picked up in person at an HRA office in Manhattan by an individual who signed for them under the name "Rudean Weir" and presented an identification bearing defendant WEIR's likeness. Approximately \$3.6 million was deposited into an account controlled by WEIR between October 2020 and May 2022. Another approximately \$1 million was deposited during that time into an account controlled by WEAH. During this period, about \$1 million was transferred from the bank account controlled by WEIR to the one held in WEAH's name.

The investigation was referred to DOI by the Department of Social Services.

Commissioner Strauber thanked U.S Attorney for the Southern District of New York Damian Williams and his staff for their collaboration on this investigation and prosecution, which was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Weinberg.

This investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Social Services, specifically Assistant Inspector General Alexandra Davie along with Senior Investigative Auditor Yanyan Wang, under the supervision of Director of Audits Laila Yu, Deputy Inspector General Jeremy Reyes, Senior Inspector General John Bellanie, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel G. Cort.

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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