



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**FORMER ACS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST CHARGED
IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrest yesterday of a former City Administration of Children's Services ("ACS") Youth Development Specialist ("YDS") on charges that he engaged in workers' compensation fraud, illegally obtaining over \$18,000. DOI's investigation was prompted by a report from another ACS employee that the defendant, while on leave, worked for Uber Eats food delivery service. The Office of Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark is prosecuting this case.

OBADIAH ISRAEL, 30, of Elmont, N.Y., is charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Perjury in the First Degree, Insurance Fraud in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, all class D felonies; Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Insurance Fraud in the Fourth Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree and Penalties for Fraudulent Practices, all class E felonies; and Petit Larceny, Making an Apparently Sworn False Statement in the Second Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fifth Degree and Insurance Fraud in the Fifth Degree, all class A misdemeanors. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison and a class A misdemeanor is punishable by up to a year's incarceration.

ISRAEL was arrested Wednesday and released on his own recognizance following his arraignment early Thursday morning in Bronx Criminal Court.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "This former ACS employee collected workers' compensation benefits and falsely stated under oath that he had not returned to work for any employer, when in fact he was earning thousands of dollars as an Uber Eats delivery driver, according to the charges. I thank the ACS worker who reported this alleged corruption to DOI and the Bronx District Attorney's Office for their partnership in holding to account those who steal from the City by collecting benefits they are not entitled to."

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark said, "The defendant allegedly made more than \$19,000 working for Uber Eats while simultaneously claiming he was fully disabled and receiving over \$18,000 in worker's compensation benefits. Dishonest public employees will be held accountable for schemes to take taxpayer money that they did not lawfully earn. I thank DOI for working with our Investigations Division to root out corruption in our City."

According to DOI's investigation, during the timeframe of the alleged crimes, ISRAEL worked as a YDS at Horizon Juvenile Center ("Horizon") in the Bronx, where he was responsible for the supervision of residents.

According to the criminal complaint, ISRAEL submitted documents to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board in 2020 and 2021, including a workers' compensation claim and nine doctor's notes supporting the claim, and a

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reasonable accommodate request to ACS, in which ISRAEL falsely represented himself as wholly disabled and unable to work. As alleged, in September 2021, during a Workers' Compensation Board hearing, ISRAEL falsely stated under oath that he had not returned to work for any employer. The complaint alleges that as a result of these submissions and false statements, the New York State Workers' Compensation Board remitted approximately \$18,370 in unemployment benefits to ISRAEL, which he was not entitled to receive. Documents received from Uber, as well as bank records reviewed as part of the investigation, revealed that from August 2020 through September 2021, ISRAEL worked as a driver employed by Uber Eats, and was paid approximately \$19,695 by Uber during that period, as alleged in the complaint. The complaint also alleges that ISRAEL was observed playing basketball on June 2, 2021. He returned to full duty at ACS on February 8, 2022.

ISRAEL started as a YDS in June 2019, and was receiving an annual salary of approximately \$56,097 in April 2023, when he was terminated for reasons unrelated to DOI's investigation.

Commissioner Strauber thanked ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser and his staff for their cooperation in this investigation. Commissioner Strauber also thanked the Office of the New York State Inspector General and the New York State Workers' Compensation Board for their assistance with this investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Samantha Sizemore of the Bronx District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Bureau Supervisor John Oxenreiter; Deputy Chief of the Bureau Michelle Milanes; Bureau Chief Herman Wun, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division Denise Kodjo and Chief of the Investigations Division Wanda Perez-Maldonado.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for ACS, and handled by Deputy Inspector General Harlyn Griffenberg, under the supervision of Senior Inspector General Laura Millendorf, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

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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