



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**FORMER NYC DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION CAPTAIN SENTENCED TO
60 DAYS IN JAIL ON CHARGES OF STEALING \$40,000 IN INVESTMENT RUSE**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on the sentencing today of a former Captain with the City Department of Correction ("DOC") to 60 days in jail and five years' probation on charges of stealing \$40,000 from an individual as part of a purported investment agreement. DOI initiated its investigation after the victim reported the incident to DOC, which then alerted DOI. The Office of Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz prosecuted this matter.

STEVE FRANCOIS, 45, of Jamaica, N.Y., was arrested on April 4, 2022 and charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony. On December 15, 2023, after a jury trial, FRANCOIS was found guilty of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, both class D felonies. Today, FRANCOIS was sentenced to 60 days in jail and five years' probation, and he has provided a repayment check to the victim for \$40,000.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "Today, the defendant, a former Correction Captain, faces the consequences of a scheme to steal funds he had agreed to invest, conduct that falls short of the integrity that we expect of law enforcement officers. I thank the Queens District Attorney's office and the City Department of Correction for their partnership on this investigation."

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz said, "This defendant, a former law enforcement officer who held a position of trust, scammed the victim out of her hard-earned money. Thank you to the Department of Investigation and the Department of Correction for their work on this case. We are grateful that the victim got her money back and that justice was served."

DOC Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie said, "The reprehensible actions of this individual are in no way indicative of the moral character of the hard-working men and women who make up the City's Boldest. This incident violates the oath of integrity and honesty that correction officers are sworn to uphold and this individual has no place in our department. Thank you to the NYC Department of Investigation and the Queens District Attorney's office for their diligent work on this case."

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, the victim agreed, by written contract, to invest \$40,000 with FRANCOIS with a return of \$15,000. The \$55,000 total was due to the victim in October 2021. On September 3, 2021, the victim met with FRANCOIS outside his Queens County residence and provided FRANCOIS with a \$40,000 cashier's check. On December 21, 2021, after FRANCOIS gave conflicting responses to the victim's inquiries about the status of her money, FRANCOIS sent the victim a funeral announcement and pictures of a man in a coffin, telling the victim that the man they were doing business with was deceased and the victim's money would not be returned. DOI

investigators reviewed bank records from an account in FRANCOIS's name, which revealed that FRANCOIS deposited the \$40,000 cashier's check into his account on September 4, 2021; and that between September 8 and September 10, 2021, FRANCOIS withdrew a total of \$39,937.43 from the same account. FRANCOIS did not have permission and authority to take, use, possess or remove the \$40,000 that was provided to him by the victim by false pretenses. During the time of the incident, between September and December 2021, FRANCOIS was on sick leave from DOC.

FRANCOIS, began his employment at DOC in May 2013, was suspended on the date of his arrest and subsequently resigned from DOC on December 15, 2023, following his conviction. At the time of his resignation, FRANCOIS received an annual base salary of approximately \$118,056.

Commissioner Strauber thanked Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz and her staff for their partnership in this investigation and prosecution of this matter; and DOC Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, and her staff, for their referral and cooperation in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Correction, specifically DOC Captain Lawrence Bond and Correction Investigator Ernesto Gonzalez, under the supervision of Inspector General Whitney Ferguson, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Dimitris Gizas and Assistant District Attorney Daniel Lewis, Unit Chief of the Revenue Crimes Unit of the Queens District Attorney's Frauds Bureau, under the supervision of Joseph T. Conley III, Bureau Chief, and Hana Kim, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Investigations Division, Gerard A. Brave.

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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