The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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NYC SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER CHARGED WITH ALLEGEDLY FILING A FRAUDULENT LOAN APPLICATION THROUGH THE SBA'S PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM ("PPP") TO ILLEGALLY OBTAIN A $592K GOVERNMENT LOAN

Nadia I. Shihata, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on the arrest today of a Supervising Probation Officer with the City's Department of Probation ("DOP") on charges of submitting a fraudulent loan application on behalf of her business, through the Small Business Administration ("SBA") COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP"), to gain a $592,000 government-guaranteed loan, which she was not entitled to receive. The loan was forgiven based on fraudulent representations made by the defendant and supported with the attachment of fraudulent bank records. DOI's investigation was prompted by a report from the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance regarding discrepancies regarding her business. DOI investigated this matter in partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, which is prosecuting the case.

NGINA COPELAND, 54, of New York, N.Y., was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349, and one count of wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343. COPELAND was arraigned today before United States Magistrate Judge Stewart D. Aaron and released on $70,000 bond. Her next court date is scheduled for July 31, 2026.

DOI Commissioner Nadia I. Shihata said, "As charged, this Probation Officer allegedly schemed to exploit federal government relief funds intended to help struggling businesses survive an unprecedented public health crisis. Probation officers are entrusted to uphold the law and serve as an example to those they supervise, not to violate the law and abuse programs designed to provide a lifeline to business owners in need. I thank the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York for their partnership to hold accountable those who seek to defraud and compromise taxpayer-funded relief programs."

According to the criminal complaint, COPELAND owns Andaiye's Hair Closet ("AHC"), a C-Corporation headquartered in the Bronx, N.Y. The investigation showed from June 2020 through June 2021, COPELAND and another individual allegedly engaged in a scheme to defraud the SBA, by applying for a PPP loan on behalf of AHC. The individual prepared the PPP loan application, which contained materially false representations about the company. In connection with the loan application, COPELAND certified, among other things, that the information and all supporting documents were true and accurate. As an attachment to the loan application, COPELAND provided a list of AHC's purported employees, approximately 31, and stated that each employee had the same hourly wage, year-to-date earnings, hours, and percentage of deduction. The investigation identified eight individuals listed as employees who stated they did not know COPELAND and had never worked for or with her; and at least one of the individuals listed as an employee was an inmate in the New York State Department of Corrections during the period that individual was purportedly employed by COPELAND. The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance had no records under the name AHC or its registered employee identification number for fiscal years 2019 and 2020. Based on that fraudulent application, COPELAND was issued an SBA-guaranteed loan in the total amount of approximately $592,500. The loan was forgiven on June 23, 2021, based on alleged fraudulent representations made by COPELAND regarding AHC's payroll and business expenses, which COPELAND supported by attaching fraudulent bank records.

COPELAND began employment at DOP in April 2018 and currently has an annual base salary of approximately $86,500.

Commissioner Shihata thanked Jay Clayton, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, for his office's partnership on this case, which is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney William K. Stone of the Office's General Crimes Unit.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by Correction Captain Investigator Lawrence Bond with DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOC and was supervised by Senior Investigative Attorney/Assistant Inspector General Alison Andrews, Deputy Inspector General Mercedes Bayon, Inspector General Marissa Carro, Acting Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Audrey Feldman and Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan.

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