



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #002-2001

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2001

CITY CORRECTION OFFICER ARRESTED IN \$5K "UNEMPLOYMENT" SCAM

-- Illegally Got Benefits After Termination From Unauthorized Telephone Co. Job --

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of WANDA GARLAND, a City Department of Correction (DOC) Officer, for stealing nearly \$5,000, while employed as a Correction Officer, by fraudulently obtaining State Department of Labor (DOL) unemployment benefits for five months after she was fired from an unauthorized second job as a Bell Atlantic customer service representative.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "This defendant selfishly tried to collect not once, but twice, from the taxpayer -- both by receiving City wages, and, at the same time, getting State unemployment benefits. Fortunately, a concerned citizen's anonymous complaint led to today's arrest." He further noted that DOC policy requires Correction Officers to obtain written permission from their Commanding Officer to engage in outside employment, which may not exceed 20 hours per week.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, the investigation began last April, when the Manhattan District Attorney's Office referred to DOI an anonymous complaint initially received at DOL claiming that GARLAND was illegally receiving State unemployment benefits.

The investigation disclosed that GARLAND, who was appointed a Correction Officer on July 5, 1990, had been hired by Bell Atlantic on April 20, 1998, as a full-time customer service representative, and, been terminated a year later, on April 26, 1999. Subsequently, on June 2, 1999, GARLAND filed an unemployment benefits' claim, and, two days later, allegedly submitted to DOL a fraudulent disclaimer, stating that she had not worked for New York City in the previous 18 months, when, in fact, she was employed full-time as a Correction Officer.

The investigation further revealed that GARLAND, between June 6 and November 14, 1999, had earned DOC gross wages totaling \$27,164 while, at the same time, fraudulently receiving unemployment insurance benefits totaling \$4,922.

GARLAND, 33, of 10 East 138th Street in Manhattan, was charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a Class D felony, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a Class E felony. If convicted, she faces up to 7 years in prison.

GARLAND, who was assigned to the Adolescent Reception and Detention Center on Rikers Island, earning \$49,023 a year, was suspended without pay, pending the outcome of the case.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, DOL, and DOC for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Michael Caruso, Inspector General for DOC, and members of his staff, including First Deputy Inspector General Josephine Pradegan and Confidential Investigator Danielle White.

The Office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Paul Hare is handling the matter.