



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

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CONTACT: EMILY GEST
(212) 825-5931

DOI ARRESTS SCOFFLAW FOR FORGERY

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of RAYMOND D. COPELAND for using a phony certified check for \$638 to redeem his towed car from a City marshal.

COPELAND, 32, of Jamaica, Queens, has been charged with Forgery in the Second Degree and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, both Class D Felonies, as well as Petit Larceny, a Class A Misdemeanor, and Issuing a Bad Check, a Class B Misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces a maximum of seven years in prison.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This defendant tried to use a worthless check in order to bail his car out and, in doing so, has now compounded his problems. Not only does he owe the City money, but he faces criminal charges and potentially time in jail. He and others like him should realize that these schemes are not worth the risks involved."

Commissioner Gill Hearn said that in July 2003 a City Marshal towed Copeland's 1996 Ford Explorer in an effort to collect \$375 that Copeland owed the City for overdue parking fines. Copeland presented a personal check for \$638 to the Marshal's Office in Jamaica, Queens that covered both his fines and the Marshal's towing fees. Because the check contained a bank certification stamp, the Marshal's clerk accepted it and released Copeland's car. Later, the check was returned for insufficient funds, and the Marshal discovered that the certification stamp was from a different bank than the one on which the check was drawn. DOI's investigation determined that the stamp belonged to a bank where Copeland had been employed, that the bank had stopped certifying personal checks in 2002, and that the stamp should have been destroyed at that time. Copeland is no longer employed at the bank.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Bureau of City Marshals, particularly Assistant Inspector General Pamela Woolbright. The office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case.

Criminal charges are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.*