



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2002

CORRECTION OFFICER ARRESTED FOR RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT ***-- Discharged Firearm In New York City Taxicab --***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of THOMAS R. BUCKLEY, a Correction Officer with the New York City Department of Correction (DOC), who is charged with a felony for having fired his pistol while riding in a taxicab in Manhattan. Buckley surrendered to DOI investigators today.

According to Commissioner Gill Hearn, on March 16, 2002, after the St. Patrick's Day parade, Buckley, in uniform, was celebrating in Manhattan, at Nevada Smith's Tavern, on Third Avenue, between 11th and 12th Streets. At approximately 10 p.m., two other Correction Officers helped Buckley into a taxicab and told the driver to take Buckley to his residence in Queens. After the cab had traveled a few blocks north on Third Avenue, Buckley told the driver to stop. Before the driver did so, however, Buckley fired one shot from his 9 millimeter pistol through the cab's partition. Buckley then left the cab and walked away. The felony complaint that has been filed in the New York County Criminal Court alleges that Buckley told a DOI investigator that he was drunk when he fired the weapon.

Correction Officers may request DOC's permission to carry firearms for their personal protection. Buckley had such permission, which was revoked when he was suspended from his job on March 17, 2002, immediately after the incident. Buckley remains suspended without pay.

Commissioner Gill Hearn said, "This Correction Officer's actions in drawing and firing his gun, as charged in the felony complaint, endangered the lives of the cab driver and other people in the area. Thankfully, no one was hit, and DOI investigators, who promptly investigated the incident, confiscated the officer's weapon."

Buckley, 35, of Queens, has been charged with Reckless Endangerment in the First Degree. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

Buckley was hired as a Correction Officer on February 27, 1997, worked at Rikers Island, and, before his suspension, received an annual salary of \$54,048.

The investigation was conducted by Michael Caruso, DOI's Assistant Commissioner and Inspector

General for DOC, and members of his staff, particularly Captain Vincent Valerio and Confidential Investigator

Correction Officer Arrested For Reckless Endangerment

Michelle Flores.

The office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case, which has been assigned to Assistant District Attorney James Kim of Trial Bureau 40, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney John Hogan, Bureau Chief.

The charge is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless convicted in court.