

2003



ROBERT T. JOHNSON  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
OF BRONX COUNTY

<http://bronxda.net>

851 GRAND CONCOUR  
BRONX, N. Y. 10451  
590-2234

— PRESS RELEASE —

Thursday, February 13, 2003

**GRAND JURY CHARGES HIGH RANKING CORRECTION DEPARTMENT  
OFFICIAL WITH GRAND LARCENY AND OTHER OFFENSES**

Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson and New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn today announced that an indictment has been unsealed charging a high ranking official of the Department of Correction with grand larceny and other offenses.

It is alleged that Anthony Serra, 42, a New York City Correction Department Bureau Chief, used department workers, who were being paid with taxpayers' dollars, to make repairs and maintain the grounds at his home in suburban Mahopac, New York in Putnam County. Correction Department personnel also allegedly were used to run errands for Serra's family. The alleged crimes occurred between February, 2001 and November, 2002 while Serra supervised the DOC's Offices of Custody Management, Compliance and Management and Planning.

District Attorney Johnson said: "These charges represent a violation of the public trust and are particularly offensive in light of the city's current fiscal reality.

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The conduct of this defendant appears to be motivated solely by greed. We intend to prosecute this case vigorously and will recommend an appropriate term of incarceration in state prison if the defendant is convicted.”

Commissioner of Investigation Hearn said: “The conduct charged in this eighty nine count indictment against Anthony Serra, a three-star chief, represents a gross abuse of power and manipulation of the system. Anthony Serra boldly and arrogantly used the Department of Correction as his own home improvement and valet service. The conduct charged is an insult to the agency and the many dedicated, hard-working employees at DOC. Rest assured, this investigation will continue and we will make every effort to make sure this conduct does not resume.”

Serra surrendered this morning, accompanied by his attorney, following a nearly five month long joint investigation by the Office of the Bronx District Attorney and the New York City Department of Investigation. Serra was arraigned before State Supreme Court Justice John Byrne.

The eighty nine count indictment charges Serra with one count of Grand larceny in the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, a Class D felony offense, one count of Defrauding the Government, a Class E felony offense, forty one counts of Falsifying Business Records in the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, a Class E felony

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offense, forty one counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, a Class E felony offense, two counts of Official Misconduct, a Class A misdemeanor offense and three counts of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the 5<sup>th</sup> degree, a Class A misdemeanor offense.

If convicted, Serra could receive a maximum sentence of up to seven years imprisonment on the Class D felony offense and up to four years imprisonment on each of the Class E felony offenses. The Class A misdemeanor offenses are each punishable by a maximum term of up to one year in jail.

Serra has been charged with having correction officers, as well as civilian employees with crafts and trades skills, drive from the city jail on Rikers Island to his home in Mahopac, approximately fifty miles away. There, on city time, the workers would plant trees and shrubs, cut the lawn, repair the driveway, remodel a bathroom and upgrade the kitchen, among other things. It is also alleged that Serra systematically looted a Department of Correction storage shed of items that were recovered at the Mahopac home including a ladder, leaf-blower, work table, mulch and other supplies. Serra, according to the indictment, falsified time sheets and over time hours for the workers involved.

This is a continuing investigation and anyone with information is encouraged to come forward.



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District Attorney Johnson and Commissioner Hearn thanked the following people for their hard work on this investigation. Inspector General Department of Correction, Michael Caruso, DOI Chief of Staff, Elizabeth Glazer, Deputy Commissioner of Investigations, Daniel Brownell, Examining Attorney DOI, Robert Eisman, Assistant Inspector General William Holland, Auditor Yuval Hibshoosh, Correction Officer Investigator George Santiago, NYPD Captain Ann Marie Connell and her squad, Chief Investigations, Assistant District Attorney Stephen Bookin, Chief of Rackets, Assistant District Attorney Thomas Leahy,

The case is being prosecuted by Senior Trial Assistant District Attorney Donald Levin and Assistant District Attorney Richard Rect