



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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### **DOI INVESTIGATION STYMIES ATTEMPTED THEFT OF \$17,218 FROM CITY PENSION SYSTEM**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today that a DOI investigation exposed and stopped a charged attempted theft of \$17,218 from the New York City Employees Retirement System ("NYCERS") by a beneficiary who falsely claimed that he never received a survivor's benefit check. In fact, DOI's investigation found REGINALD WYCHE, 33, of Florence, S.C., the adult son of a deceased City retiree, had cashed his check eight months earlier. The bogus lost-check claim, if successful, would have significantly increased WYCHE's payout from the City's pension fund. WYCHE was arrested by DOI on Friday, June 24, 2011, during an undercover DOI operation in which WYCHE thought he was going to receive a replacement check.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "The City cannot afford any fraud against our pension system. Anyone tempted to steal from a City pension fund should know DOI will investigate and refer such activity for prosecution."

After NYCERS reported a fraud allegation, DOI commenced an investigation. DOI confirmed that in April 2011 WYCHE, the beneficiary of a NYCERS pensioner who died in 2009, submitted a notarized affidavit and a handwritten letter to NYCERS stating he did not receive his survivor's benefit check for \$17,218 and requesting that NYCERS deposit replacement funds into his account at a federal credit union. Through its investigation, which included an examination of records and witness interviews, DOI determined that WYCHE had not only received the original NYCERS check but had cashed it in August 2010 at a check cashing establishment in Brooklyn. DOI found that the cashed NYCERS check bore WYCHE's endorsement signature and that in cashing the check he had presented multiple identification documents that matched the information in the affidavit he submitted to NYCERS.

At the direction of DOI investigators, NYCERS arranged a meeting with WYCHE to review his claim that he lost the \$17,218 check. On June 24, 2011, undercover DOI investigators were present for this meeting in Brooklyn, during which WYCHE confirmed his identity and that he was the person who signed and mailed the affidavit and handwritten letter to NYCERS requesting a replacement check. At the conclusion of the meeting, WYCHE was arrested.

WYCHE has been charged with Attempted Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Attempted Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all class E felonies, and other related misdemeanors. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison. The office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes, NYCERS Executive Director Diane D'Alessandro and NYCERS Director of Security Craig Thornton and their staffs for their assistance in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for NYCERS.

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

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.*

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