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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FORMER BOOKKEEPER FOR BROOKLYN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR
INDICTED FOR STEALING MORE THAN
\$2.6 MILLION FROM ESTATES OF DECEASED INDIVIDUALS**

Former Corrections Officer and Two Other Defendants Indicted for Colluding in Fraudulent Check Scheme

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., and New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn today announced the indictment of RICHARD PAUL, 34, the bookkeeper for the Kings County Public Administrator's Office, for stealing more than \$2.6 million from the estates of individuals who died without a will by manipulating the agency's check writing system. The investigation also charges three other defendants for colluding with PAUL in the scheme. PAUL is charged with Grand Larceny in the First Degree and Defrauding the Government; TARYN MILLER, 33, is charged with Grand Larceny in the First Degree; and RANSEL SANGSTER, 35, and GEORGE BETHEA, 34, are each charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree.¹

“By breaching the public trust in order to line his pockets, the defendant violated his obligations to the City and to all New Yorkers,” District Attorney Vance said. “Together with our investigative partners at the Department of Investigation, my Office's Public Integrity Unit is committed to the investigation and prosecution of corruption and other crimes committed by public employees. I urge members of the public to call our Public Integrity Hotline at 212-335-8987 to report suspected abuses of the public trust. I thank Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn and her team for their expert work.”

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said: “This investigation exposed an audacious and calculated scheme to steal money from the dead, according to the indictments. Investigators quickly found that a key insider and his accomplices methodically raided the accounts of a City office charged with safeguarding decedents' property. DOI is recommending measures to the relevant City agencies to prevent a recurrence of the fraud uncovered by the investigation. I thank District Attorney Vance and his staff for their full partnership in this significant case and the honest City employees and others who helped us find the facts and stop a crime in progress.”

The charges contained in the indictments are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The Public Administrator of each county oversees the estates of people who die without a will, also called “intestates.” If no next of kin or beneficiaries come forward, the Public Administrator maintains the funds and assets of the decedent’s estate, and the money eventually is transferred to the New York City Department of Finance (“DOF”).

According to documents filed in court and statements made on the record in court, as the bookkeeper for the Kings County Public Administrator’s Office, PAUL’S responsibilities included transferring money from intestates to the DOF. From August 2008 to November 2011, PAUL is accused of stealing the money by rerouting funds intended for the DOF to individuals who were not authorized to receive the funds.

According to documents filed in court, from late August 2008 through early November 2011, MILLER is accused of helping PAUL to facilitate the scheme and receiving stolen funds. SANGSTER is accused of receiving a forged Public Administrator’s check in the amount of \$390,287.41 in August 2008, when he was working at the New York City Department of Homeless Services. SANGSTER is also accused of receiving another unauthorized check in the amount of \$200,000 in November 2011, when he was employed as a corrections officer by the New York City Department of Correction. Defendant BETHEA, who is MILLER’s husband, is accused of receiving \$150,000 of stolen funds.

The investigation into this scheme is continuing.

Assistant District Attorney Brian P. Weinberg and Senior Investigative Counsel Thomas Mooney are handling the prosecution of this case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Daniel G. Cort, Chief of the Public Integrity Unit. Deputy Chief Financial Investigator Michael Kelly and Senior Rackets Investigator Donato Siciliano of the Investigation Bureau also assisted in the investigation. Trial Preparation Assistant Sara Arrow also provided assistance.

District Attorney Vance thanked DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn for her office’s assistance in the investigation, as well as Chief of Investigations John Kantor, Assistant Commissioner Michael Carroll, Assistant Commissioner Keith Schwam, Chief Auditor Floralba Paulino, and Detective Raymond Casablanca of the New York City Police Department, Department of Investigations Squad.

Defendant Information:

RICHARD PAUL, D.O.B. 11/21/1977
Brooklyn, NY

Charges:

- Grand Larceny in the First Degree, a class B felony, one count
- Defrauding the Government, a class E felony, one count

TARYN MILLER, D.O.B. 10/18/1978
Brooklyn, NY

Charges:

- Grand Larceny in the First Degree, a class B felony, one count

RANSEL SANGSTER, D.O.B. 08/13/1976
Brooklyn, NY

Charges:

- Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, two counts

GEORGE BETHEA, D.O.B. 09/25/1977
Brooklyn, NY

Charge:

- Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, one count

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