



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

**Release # 035-2002**

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2002

### **DOI ARREST DJJ COUNSELOR FOR SEXUAL ABUSE**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of BARRETT WALTERS, a juvenile counselor employed by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), on charges that he sexually abused a 16-year old male resident of a juvenile center and endangered the welfare of another 16-year old male resident.

WALTERS was charged with 2 counts of Endangering the Welfare of a Child, Sexual Abuse in the Second Degree, and Sexual Abuse in the Third Degree. If convicted, he faces up to 2 years in prison.

Commissioner Gill Hearn said, "It is troubling and sad that Mr. Walters, who counseled young defendants and worked in a position of trust, abused that trust by engaging in such reprehensible behavior."

DJJ operates the facility -- Bridges Juvenile Center, formerly known as Spofford, located at 1221 Spofford Avenue in the Bronx -- as a facility for juveniles, ages 9 to 16, held in pre-adjudication detention on behalf of Family, Criminal, or Supreme Court. WALTERS, 46, was one of a number of juvenile counselors responsible for counseling and caring for the approximately 5,000 juvenile defendants processed through the Bridges facility each year.

According to the criminal complaint filed late yesterday afternoon in Bronx Criminal Court, WALTERS allegedly, in January 2002, coerced a 16-year old male juvenile resident to strip below the waist while WALTERS watched, in exchange for providing the juvenile with ecstasy. WALTERS is also accused of grabbing the buttocks and penis of another 16-year old male resident in March of this year.

WALTERS, of 1980 Park Avenue in Manhattan, had worked at DJJ since January 28, 2001, earning \$32,036 a year. He was terminated on June 19, 2002.

Commissioner Gill Hearn expressed her sincere appreciation to DJJ Commissioner Neil Hernandez and members of his staff for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Michael Caruso, DOI's Assistant Commissioner and Inspector General for DJJ and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Valerie Brown, Supervising Investigator Octavia Hill, and Correction Officer Investigator Cindi Tsui.

DOI Arrest DJJ Counselor For Sexual Abuse

The Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney David Kromm is handling the matter.