



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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DOI ARRESTS BRONX HRA SUPERVISOR IN \$2,500 RENT SCAM
-- Used Her Maiden Name To Get On Welfare & Married Name To Issue Herself Benefits --

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of JACQUELYN POPE, a City Human Resources Administration (HRA) eligibility specialist and assistant supervisor assigned to HRA's Bergen Job Center in the Bronx, for stealing \$2,550 by unlawfully creating a fake welfare case--using her maiden name to pose as a recipient--and then improperly approving--using her married name and supervisory job title--6 emergency payments which she used to pay her back rent.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOI began an investigation after HRA referred a complaint that POPE had improperly received welfare rental arrears payments.

The investigation disclosed that, in May 2000, POPE had received \$1,750 in welfare rental arrears payments from HRA to avoid eviction for nonpayment of rent from her apartment at 3667 Bronxwood Avenue in the Bronx. HRA allows its employees facing eviction to obtain welfare aid to pay rent arrears, but requires them to apply for such benefits at an HRA job center other than the one where they work, to fully disclose their employment and income, and to sign an agreement to repay the money. POPE met all the HRA requirements and thus legitimately obtained \$1,750 in benefits. Thereafter, however, she failed to repay any of the money to HRA, thereby rendering herself ineligible for any future rental arrears payments.

The investigation further revealed that, in December 2000, POPE again faced eviction for non-payment of rent, but, this time, lacking HRA rental arrears payments eligibility, fraudulently opened a welfare case for herself by creating a phony identity. POPE used her maiden name, "Jacquelyn Mazone," and an altered Social Security number and date of birth to complete 6 HRA "Public Assistance Single Issuance Authorization Forms," which are used by eligibility specialists to detail, approve, and issue specific welfare payments to clients with special needs, including rent payments. The authorization forms requested that HRA issue to "Jacquelyn Mazone" six \$425 checks for payment of rent arrears. POPE herself then approved the forms by signing her married name, "Jacquelyn Pope," and using her HRA job title. POPE submitted the 6 fraudulent authorization forms to HRA, received 6 welfare rent checks totaling \$2,550, and gave them to her landlord to pay back rent.

POPE, 52, an eligibility specialist and assistant supervisor authorized to approve welfare grants of up to \$500, has been an HRA employee since October 1993 and was assigned to the Bergen Job Center's Division of Aids Services Unit, where her responsibilities included servicing the financial needs of welfare clients with AIDS. She was earning an annual salary of \$30,939 and has been suspended without pay.

DOI Arrests Bronx HRA Supervisor In \$2,500 Rent Scam

POPE was charged with Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Welfare Fraud in the Fourth Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree, and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, all Class E felonies. If convicted, she faces up to 4 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Gerard Hoey, DOI's Inspector General for HRA, and members of his staff including Deputy Inspector General Benjamin Defibaugh and Confidential Investigator Nanci Chalkin.

The Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Calvin Woo, of the DA's Arson and Economic Crimes Unit, under the direction of Bureau Chief Richard Baker, is handling the matter.