



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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CIVIC CENTER PARKING GARAGE CASHIER CHARGED WITH \$685 THEFT ***-- Second Theft In 2 Months At Same DOT Parking Facility --***

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2000 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of JAMES SELLERS, JR., a cashier at the City Department of Transportation (DOT) Civic Center parking garage in downtown Manhattan, for stealing \$685 in cash while on duty.

SELLERS worked for Roosevelt Parking and Maintenance Corp. of Woodside, Queens, a contractor hired by DOT to operate the 400-space parking facility at 109-130 Park Row for a monthly fee.

Only two months ago, on April 18, a former manager of the garage, TESSA DACOSTA, was arrested for stealing more than \$110,000 in customer receipts over an 18-month span.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOI began an investigation on May 31 after a Roosevelt company official complained that SELLERS had allegedly left his post at about 5:30 p.m. the day before and taken hundreds of dollars in cash with him. As a cashier SELLERS was responsible for collecting parking fees from customers which would later be deposited in a DOT bank account.

The investigation disclosed that the assistant garage manager was alerted by another cashier, who was working the 4 p.m.-midnight shift with SELLERS, that SELLERS had vacated his post and that cars were backing up near SELLERS' booth. On checking the booth, the assistant manager discovered that SELLERS was gone and that the cash drawer was empty but for \$23.65 in coins. An audit of cash register tapes and computer printouts revealed that a total of \$685 -- which included \$360 in cash used for customer change and \$325 in cash receipts collected from exiting customers -- was missing.

SELLERS, 35, of Brooklyn, who had been hired on May 13, only 18 days before the alleged theft, and was earning \$6 an hour, was charged with Petit Larceny, a Class A misdemeanor. At his arraignment yesterday before Judge A. Kirke Bartley, Jr., in Manhattan Criminal Court, SELLERS pled guilty as charged, and was sentenced to 4 months in jail.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to DOT Commissioner Wilbur L. Chapman and his staff for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Inspector General for DOT, Ronald P. Calvosa, and members of his staff, including First Deputy Inspector General Mary T. Piechocki, Assistant Inspector General Chuck Joe, and Confidential Investigators Omar Sarach and Edward Zinser.

The Office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau prosecuted the case.