



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY EX-TEMP ARRESTED IN "JOB PROMISE" SCAM

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of ROBERTO M. BONILLA, a former temporary New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) bilingual interviewer, for promising to obtain permanent positions for workers hired by NYCHA as summer seasonal aides. BONILLA allegedly solicited the aides during the City agency's initial hiring process in June, and promised, in return for \$150, to get them permanent agency positions.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, an investigation began in June, when NYCHA notified DOI about BONILLA's corrupt offer to a female seasonal aide.

The victim, a Bronx resident, told investigators that BONILLA, during the hiring process, told her that, for \$150, he could guarantee her a permanent NYCHA position when her summer employment ended. The victim said BONILLA claimed that he would split the \$150 payoff with a senior manager in NYCHA's Human Resources Department, who could "pull her application" and guarantee her a permanent position.

At the behest of DOI, the victim, who had not yet paid any money to BONILLA and who was ostensibly still under consideration for permanent employment, contacted BONILLA and engaged in several recorded conversations in which BONILLA discussed the details of the scheme and agreed to meet a relative of the victim in order to obtain the payoff. Thereafter, on June 27, 2001, at Church and Vesey Streets in Manhattan, the victim's relative gave BONILLA \$150 cash.

Subsequently, on July 13, 2001, a second victim came forward to complain about a similar scheme. This second victim, a Brooklyn resident, said she had already paid BONILLA \$150, and added that BONILLA had told her that he would refund the money if he could not obtain a permanent agency position for her. Meanwhile, for reasons unrelated to the investigation, NYCHA, on June 19, 2001, had terminated BONILLA, who had been hired on May 2, 2001, after only 6 weeks of employment.

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BONILLA, 34, of 600 West 190th Street in Manhattan, had obtained his temporary position with NYCHA through an employment agency, Essex Temporary Agency of 600 W.190th Street in Manhattan. He has been charged with Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, a Class D felony; Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a Class E felony; and, Scheme to Defraud in the Second Degree and Petit Larceny, both Class A misdemeanors. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and Inspector General for NYCHA Steven A. Pasichow, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Steven Gruberger, Assistant Inspector General John Kilpatrick, and Confidential Investigator Ivonne Alvarado-DeJesus.

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