



Department of Investigation

Press Release

District Attorney - New York County

Bronx Married Couple Indicted In \$60K Welfare Fraud

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2000

Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau announced today the indictment of a Bronx married couple on charges of stealing a total of over \$60,000 in government money by fraudulently obtaining federal subsidies of \$42,268 from the City Department of Housing Preservation and Development for rent, and of \$18,161 from the Human Resources Administration for welfare and food stamps. The indictment resulted from an investigation conducted by the New York City Department of Investigation.

The indictment charges COLEEN FRANCIS, a clerical temp, with two counts of Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, and two counts of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, and RAYMOND JIMENEZ, her husband, an unemployed data entry clerk, with one count Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree. Both defendants will be arraigned on a six-count indictment later today in New York Supreme Court.

The investigation began in March 1999, when DOI received information that FRANCIS was subletting her rent subsidized apartment at 1033 Bryant Avenue, in the Bronx, while residing at another location, according to DOI Commissioner Edward J. Kuriansky. The investigation disclosed that, in fact, FRANCIS was subletting the 2-family house's 1st floor, rent-subsidized apartment, and residing in the 2nd floor apartment with JIMENEZ who was listed in City records as the property owner.

The investigation further revealed that FRANCIS and JIMENEZ together had purchased the Bryant Avenue property and had listed it in JIMENEZ's name only to enable FRANCIS to continue receiving federal benefits. City records showed that JIMENEZ had filed documents with HPD that falsely claimed that he was the landlord and that FRANCIS was the 1st floor apartment tenant.

The investigation also determined that both FRANCIS and JIMENEZ were employed in full-time jobs, that FRANCIS failed to report this information to either HPD or HRA, and that FRANCIS had lived with JIMENEZ in a rent subsidized apartment at 655 Cassanova Street in the Bronx prior to their marriage and purchase of the Bryant Avenue house in 1996. In fact FRANCIS filed documents with HRA from 1989 and HPD from 1994, falsely claiming that she was unemployed, unmarried, and residing with her children only. Benefits from the Section 8 Rent subsidy program, administered by HPD, and from the Welfare and Food Stamp program, administered by HRA, are based upon family composition and total available income, among other factors.

For their role in the investigation, Mr. Morgenthau thanked Brian D. Foley, DOI Inspector General for HPD, Francis A. Sinatra, First Deputy Inspector General for HPD.

Assistant District Attorney Joanna Tucker presented the case to the grand jury and will handle the prosecution under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Bridget Fleming, Chief of the Welfare fraud unit.