



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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NYCHA EMPLOYEE TAKES IDENTITY OF TEXAS WOMAN TO OBTAIN U.S. PASSPORT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1999 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced that a federal grand jury in Manhattan has indicted "JANE DOE," a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) caretaker known as MARIA LOURDES PEREZ, for fraudulently assuming the identity of a Texas woman in order to obtain a United States passport.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, when NYCHA hired PEREZ as a caretaker in September 1993, she submitted a United States passport, a birth certificate issued in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, to a MARIA LOURDES PEREZ, and a Social Security card, in order to establish her US citizenship. However, while conducting an unrelated investigation earlier this year, DOI investigators noticed that the Social Security number supplied by PEREZ contained the prefix 459, which identifies a card issued in Texas. Further investigation revealed that the card belonged to a Maria Perez who was born in Texas and, since 1994, has had ongoing problems with the US Internal Revenue Service because of someone at NYCHA using her Social Security number.

DOI reported its findings to the Social Security Administration, which confirmed that the Social Security number in question was, in fact, issued to a Maria Perez, who was born in Texas, presently lives in Indiana, and who has never resided in New York. Shortly thereafter, DOI contacted the United States Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, which reviewed a photocopy of the passport application submitted on October 5, 1989, by the defendant PEREZ. The State Department verified that, in support of her application to obtain a United States passport, PEREZ had submitted the Social Security card belonging to Maria Perez, of Texas, and a Puerto Rican birth certificate in the name of Maria Lourdes Perez.

Commissioner Kuriansky noted that the actual identity of the defendant PEREZ is unknown at this time. PEREZ, who resides in Manhattan, has mostly recently been assigned as a caretaker at NYCHA's Jefferson Houses development in Manhattan, where her duties include grounds maintenance. She has been suspended without pay.

PEREZ, 37, has been charged with violating 18 United States Code §1542, False Statement in Application and Use of Passport. If convicted, she faces up to 10 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and NYCHA Inspector General Steven A. Pasichow and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Kevin R. Smith, and Investigative Auditor Bergia Telesford. Also assisting in the investigation were Special Agents Thad T. Osterhout and Brian Byson, of the United States Department of State Diplomatic Service, and Special Agent Kevin Reinhard, of the Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General.

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The Office of Mary Jo White, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, is prosecuting the case. Assistant United States Attorney Stefanie B. Isser is in charge of the prosecution.