



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

**Release #052-99**

### **DOI ARRESTS U.S. POSTAL EMPLOYEE FOR NYCHA TENANT FRAUD**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1999 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of LAMEISHA WASHINGTON, a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) tenant at the Sheepshead/Nostrand Houses in Brooklyn, for submitting a forged letter to NYCHA, in which she falsely claimed to have lost her job with the United States Postal Service (USPS) in an attempt to lower her monthly rent by more than \$200.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, NYCHA requires all of its tenants to file an annual affidavit reporting income, and to have their employers complete and submit a form verifying that income. The reported income is the primary factor used by NYCHA to calculate the rent it will charge a tenant during the following year, he said.

WASHINGTON, who became a USPS employee in March 1997, initially reported her new employment to NYCHA. However, in September 1998, WASHINGTON informed NYCHA that she had lost her USPS job. In support of her claim, she hand delivered to NYCHA a letter on USPS stationery verifying her loss of employment. If NYCHA had relied upon the letter, it would have reduced WASHINGTON's rent from \$495 to \$290 a month.

In November 1998, an investigation was initiated when the manager of the Sheepshead/Nostrand Houses notified DOI of his suspicions about the authenticity of the letter. Shortly thereafter, DOI contacted the United States Postal Inspection Service, which confirmed that the letter submitted by WASHINGTON was a forgery and that she was, in fact, still employed by USPS.

WASHINGTON, 32, has been a tenant at NYCHA's Sheepshead/Nostrand Houses, located at 2957 Avenue W in Brooklyn, since 1990. She is employed as a USPS Mail Processor, earning \$27,000 annually. WASHINGTON was charged with Attempted Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, she faces up to 4 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 Kevin Smith and Confidential Investigator Louis Vega. Special Agent Mark Applewhate assisted in the investigation on behalf of the United States Postal Inspection Service. The Office of Brooklyn District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case.