



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN

COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE  
NEW YORK, NY 10038  
212-825-5900

Release #107-2006  
[nyc.gov/doi](http://nyc.gov/doi)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2006**

**CONTACT: EMILY GEST**  
**(212) 825-5931**

**DOI ARRESTS CITY MORGUE TECHNICIAN FOR STEALING FROM DEAD MAN**  
**- Office of the Chief Medical Examiner employee used dead man's debit card to withdraw over \$3,000 -**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the felony arrest of PHILLIP BETHUNE, a mortuary technician with the City's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) for allegedly stealing a dead man's ATM card and using it to steal more than \$3,000 through ATM withdrawals.

BETHUNE, 38, of Brooklyn, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Identity Theft in the First Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, Tampering with Physical Evidence, and Official Misconduct. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

In early November 2006, BETHUNE was dispatched by OCME to retrieve a body at a home in Brooklyn and bring it to the Brooklyn morgue. At some point while transporting the body, BETHUNE gained possession of the decedent's wallet, where the ATM card and pin number were stored. For the next three days, BETHUNE allegedly used the decedent's debit card and PIN number to steal roughly \$3,000, primarily through ATM withdrawals. An ATM video camera captured the defendant's image while he made several withdrawals. BETHUNE has worked for OCME since 2003. The initial complaint about this matter was received by the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau, which determined that a police officer was not the suspect and referred the matter to DOI.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "The conduct charged in this criminal complaint is despicable and unnerving to the public. Last week, in separate cases, DOI arrested two City EMTs, one of whom stole \$500 from a patient she was transporting by ambulance. These defendants, City employees, betrayed the public's trust by exploiting such vulnerable circumstances. DOI will remain vigilant in both responding to complaints and doing undercover operations."

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked OCME Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Charles Hirsch and his staff for their assistance, as well as the New York City Police Department Internal Affairs Bureau, Health and Hospital Corporation (HHC) Inspector General Norman Dion, and members of his staff, for their assistance.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Inspector General for OCME, Christopher Staackmann, Deputy Inspector General Stephan Zander and Special Investigator Diane Delaney.

The Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes will prosecute, with Assistant District Attorney Karen Turner handling the case.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.*

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple.***

*To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.*