



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

Release # 064-2002

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2002

### **MAN ARRESTED FOR DEPOSITING STOLEN CHECK** *-- Purloined A \$2,000 Check Made Out To His Uncle --*

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the felony arrest of ANIL BHAGWANT, for the theft and forgery of a vendor payment check worth \$2,000.

Bhagwant, 26, of the Bronx, was arrested this morning in the Bronx. Charges are pending.

The investigation began when DOI was contacted by the Department of Finance regarding a forgery claim, said Gill Hearn. In November last year, Bhagwant's uncle, Brijlall Bhagwant, filed an affidavit of forgery stating he never received a \$2,000 vendor payment check dated August 7, 2001. Brijlall Bhagwant owns two properties in the Bronx that offer housing under Section 8, a financial assistance program for qualifying low income tenants that is administered by the New York City Housing Authority and NYC Housing Preservation and Development.

After tracing the check, DOI investigators discovered it had been deposited into Anil Bhagwant's account with HSBC Bank, said Gill Hearn. The investigators determined that Anil Bhagwant had forged his uncle's signature to make the check payable to himself and then desposited it into his own account. The two men lived in the same apartment building where mail is sometimes left outside the mailbox.

"Anil Bhagwant's greed not only led him to steal from the cash-strapped city but also from his uncle," said Gill Hearn. "Such behavior is reprehensible and won't be tolerated whether it's \$2,000 or \$20."

The investigation was conducted by Vincent E. Green, DOI Assistant Commissioner and Department of Finance Inspector, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Maureen A. Thomas-Lewis, First Assistant Inspector General Jeffrey Dolcimascolo and Special Investigator Charlie Mercieca.

The office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson will be prosecuting the case.

Criminal complaints are merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.