



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

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**DOI ARRESTS CLERICAL ASSOCIATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
IN CONNECTION WITH WELFARE FRAUD**

--Approximately \$3,400 was taken from the City as a result of the fraud--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of a New York City Correction Department ("DOC") Clerical Associate on charges of forging an employment verification document to underreport her income so she could receive public assistance from the New York City Human Resources Administration/ Department of Social Services ("HRA/DSS.") DOI began its investigation after being contacted by HRA/DSS's Bureau of Fraud Investigation ("BFI").

SHANNEL DEWITT, 23, of the Bronx, is charged with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, each class D felonies, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. If convicted, she faces up to seven years in prison.

DEWITT earns an annual salary of \$26,368.

According to the criminal complaint, DEWITT began receiving public assistance in 2004 at the same time she was working at a private company. In March 2007, DEWITT began working at DOC as a clerical associate but did not notify HRA/DSS about her job change and salary increase. In June 2007, DEWITT provided re-certification paperwork to HRA/DSS indicating that she was still working at the private company and submitted a document she claimed was from the company confirming that she was still an employee. The investigation found that DEWITT had not worked at the private company since January 5, 2007 and that the document DEWITT submitted contained a forged signature of the company's accounting supervisor. As a result, DEWITT unlawfully received at least \$3,400 in public benefits. DEWITT told investigators from DOI and BFI that she was not truthful on the recertification documentation.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Municipal employees who purposefully underreport their incomes to garner public benefits are not only committing a crime but also taking away much-needed funds from some of the most vulnerable in our City. Individuals who choose to engage in this type of illegal behavior should know that DOI will investigate and when they are caught they will face prosecution and possible jail time."

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked HRA/DSS Commissioner Robert Doar and DOC Commissioner Martin Horn, and the members of their staff, for their cooperation. Commissioner Gill Hearn also thanked the Office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson for prosecuting the case.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOC in conjunction with HRA/DSS's Bureau of Fraud Investigation Deputy Assistant Director Armando Diaz and Investigator Ann Maria Singh.

Assistant District Attorney James Cudden from the Bronx County District Attorney's Office, under the supervision of Rackets Division Bureau Chief Thomas Leahy, is prosecuting 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 at (212) 825-5959.**