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Release #21-2010
nyc.gov/html/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2010**

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**DOI ARRESTS PURPORTED “LOW-INCOME” TENANT WHOSE ANNUAL INCOME EXCEEDED \$107,000
-- Arrest is DOI's fifth this year of applicants charged with falsely reporting income to obtain HDC-sponsored apartments--**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced today the arrest of a Bronx tenant whose annual income exceeded \$107,000 but who is charged with concealing more than \$63,000 of that to obtain a reduced-rent apartment financed through the New York City Housing Development Corporation (“HDC”). So far this year, DOI has arrested five individuals on charges of falsifying income statements to obtain HDC-sponsored apartments. DOI initiated each of these investigations after HDC reported irregularities in documents submitted by the defendants. The office of New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., is prosecuting the cases.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “Individuals who look to the City and to taxpayers for affordable housing are obliged to disclose their actual incomes, not to tailor the facts to wedge themselves into programs for which they are ineligible. Cheaters deprive eligible families of their opportunities for housing assistance and undercut the programs. These arrests demonstrate DOI's continuing commitment to expose and stop housing fraud.”

Today, DOI arrested ALASSANE DJIGAL, 36, of the Bronx, who has been charged with two counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison.

According to the criminal complaint, in August 2008 and October 2008, DJIGAL applied for two separate apartments through the HDC-sponsored Low-Income Affordable Marketplace Program (“LAMP”), where the maximum household income limit was \$46,080, and, for both apartments, submitted documents stating that he earned only \$44,000 annually. DOI's investigation found that DJIGAL failed to disclose his additional annual income in 2008 of more than \$63,000 from a second job managing a clothing store, which made him ineligible for the low-income apartment he illegally obtained.

Assistant District Attorney Larken Kade of the New York County District Attorney's Office is assigned to the prosecution of the DJIGAL case.

LAMP is an HDC-financed program in which building owners agree to provide reduced-rent apartments for low-income individuals in exchange for low-interest mortgages through HDC. Prospective tenants submit applications; must meet household income requirements; and are selected through a housing lottery. In order to prove income, applicants submit recent pay stubs, employment verification letters, and tax returns.

Since February 10, 2010, DOI has arrested four other individuals on charges of falsely reporting their incomes in attempts to obtain HDC-sponsored apartments illegally:

- DOI arrested MOUSSA AHMET, 33, of the Bronx, on February 10, 2010, and later arrested his co-applicant, HAMEL DOUKOURE, 29, of the Bronx, on February 22, 2010. Each was charged with two counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a class E felony by up to four years in prison.

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According to the criminal complaints, on January 9, 2008, AHMET submitted an application for an HDC-sponsored apartment in the Bronx and a purported employment-verification form from his employer over-reporting his income to meet the income requirements. In addition, AHMET and DOUKOURE jointly applied for a second HDC-sponsored apartment on February 28, 2008. DOI's investigation found that AHMET and DOUKOURE co-signed and submitted documents that falsely reported DOUKOURE received income from the same employer in January and February 2008 when in fact DOUKOURE was not working for the company during those months. Neither AHMET nor DOUKOURE obtained a low-income, HDC-sponsored apartment.

Assistant District Attorney Asha White of the New York County District Attorney's Office has been assigned to the prosecution of the AHMET and DOUKOURE cases.

- DOI arrested BERNARD MANU, 28, of the Bronx, on March 10, 2010. He was charged with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree.

According to the criminal complaint, on June 20, 2008, MANU submitted documents for an HDC-sponsored apartment in the Bronx, reporting that he received a weekly income from his employment at a heating and ventilation company in April and May 2008. DOI's investigation found that MANU never worked at that company during those months. MANU never obtained a low-income, HDC-sponsored apartment.

- DOI arrested JOHN MELVILLE, 45, of Brooklyn, on March 10, 2010. He was charged with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree.

According to the criminal complaint, on October 20, 2008, MELVILLE submitted records for an HDC-sponsored apartment in Manhattan, reporting that he received a salary of \$29,640 from a luxury car dealership. DOI's investigation found that the defendant never worked at the company. MELVILLE never obtained a low-income, HDC-sponsored apartment.

Assistant District Attorney Claudine Caracciolo of the New York County District Attorney's Office has been assigned to the prosecution of the MANU and MELVILLE cases.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked HDC President Marc Jahr and New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., and their staffs for their assistance and cooperation during these investigations.

These investigations were conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for HDC.

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.

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