



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (“NYCHA”) EMPLOYEE FOR
DEFRAUDING NYCHA OF APPROXIMATELY \$24,870 BY TAKING TENANTS’ RENT PAYMENTS**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced the arrest of KYLE TOPPIN, former Assistant Manager of the New York City Housing Authority’s (“NYCHA”) Jackson/Morrisannia Houses in the Bronx, on charges he stole approximately \$24,870 in rental payments made by 32 unsuspecting NYCHA tenants between January 2005 and May 2007.

TOPPIN, 44, was charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, class D felonies; Defrauding the Government, a class E felony; and Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

DOI initiated an investigation in May 2007 after receiving a complaint from a NYCHA tenant regarding TOPPIN.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “This individual may have thought his scheme would go undetected. But DOI investigators tirelessly reviewed the rental transactions this individual worked on at NYCHA and conducted dozens of interviews, putting an end to this corruption. I commend the tenant who stepped forward to alert DOI, which prompted the investigation.”

According to DOI’s investigation and the criminal court complaint, DOI reviewed transactions made by TOPPIN and uncovered a scheme in which TOPPIN allegedly stole rent payments from 18 NYCHA tenants who were behind on their rent. TOPPIN instructed the tenants to submit their late rent payment to him, which is not allowed, in the form of a blank money order, with the promise that he would expedite the process. Upon receipt of the tenants’ money orders, TOPPIN would then credit the tenants’ rental account but deposit the money orders into TOPPIN’s personal bank account. Tenants were unaware of these actions because their accounts were credited.

According to DOI’s investigation and the criminal court complaint, in another alleged scheme, TOPPIN convinced 14 tenants just moving into the NYCHA development, many of whom were elderly or did not speak fluent English, to pay their first month’s rent, security deposit and various other surcharges directly to him. As with the first scheme, TOPPIN requested that they provide him with blank money orders, which he also deposited into his personal bank account.

As a result of the above allegations, NYCHA never received any of the funds it was owed and was defrauded approximately \$24,870.

As a result of the investigation, DOI recommended, and NYCHA implemented, a new procedure to the Rent Collection System, which requires a higher degree of managerial approval before an allowable credit can be entered to a tenant's account.

TOPPIN has been employed at NYCHA since June 1989 and currently earns an annual salary of approximately \$56,370. TOPPIN was removed from his position as Assistant Manager of the housing development and from any financial responsibilities pending the outcome of DOI's investigation.

The investigation was conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Robert J. McSweeney, and members of his staff, including Senior Deputy Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, Deputy Inspector General Anthony Capek, Chief Investigator John Reatz and Special Investigator Louis Vega.

Assistant District Attorney Richard P. Kearney from the Office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case.

Criminal complaints are merely an accusation. 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.**