



The City of New York
Department of Investigation
ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

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

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**CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931**

**REMARKS OF DOI COMMISSIONER ROSE GILL HEARN AT
PRESS CONFERENCE INVOLVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD INDICTMENTS**

It's a pleasure for DOI to be here today, part of a robust partnership with the Brooklyn District Attorney and the City Human Resources Administration ("HRA") to root out and prosecute public assistance fraud. These cases demonstrate the significant impact this kind of fraud has on the City and its taxpayers, diverting valuable public dollars from the City's neediest. As you can tell from today's announcement – 32 indictments -- the partnership among these three agencies has had an impact.

DOI investigators consistently work with the Brooklyn DA and HRA to gather the facts when City employees or those related to City employees conceal City income on their public assistance applications to illegally obtain benefits. Among the cases announced today, DOI investigated the matter of Shawana Kennedy, aka Shawana Wade, who is charged with failing to report her husband's income at the Department of Sanitation during a five-year period and fraudulently siphoning more than \$55,000 in food stamp and Medicaid benefits.

This case offers a caution to individuals who choose to hide City income when they apply for public assistance: The team that stands here today will use its expertise in this area to expose it and hold fraudsters accountable for their crimes, including recouping these precious funds. I thank DA Hynes and Commissioner Doar, and their staffs, and my hard working team of DOI investigators, for their joint effort in attacking this fraud and protecting public dollars.

Indictments 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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