



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

DOI ARRESTS TWO QUEENS RESIDENTS ON CHARGES THAT EACH STOLE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN RENT SUBSIDIES FROM THE CITY'S HOUSING AUTHORITY
--Since March, DOI has arrested 11 individuals in separate cases where the charged thefts from NYCHA, in total, exceed \$185,000--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of LARRY THOMAS and FELICITA JAUME on charges that in separate incidents each concealed household income and, as a result, fraudulently obtained Section 8 rent subsidies for apartments in Queens. According to the criminal complaints, THOMAS is charged with stealing \$51,870, and JAUME is charged with stealing \$19,130, in rent subsidies from the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA").

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Intentionally misrepresenting facts, such as income and family composition, to collect housing subsidies is a crime. More importantly, that kind of illegal conduct wrongfully diverts the available funding from those who need it most."

NYCHA provides affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents throughout the five boroughs and also administers a Citywide Section 8 Leased Housing Program. Participants in the Program may reside in any housing that meets the Program's requirements. Under the Program, NYCHA pays rent subsidies on behalf of the participant directly to his or her landlord. The share of the monthly rent paid by the NYCHA residents and Section 8 participants is based on their household composition and income.

Following are synopses of the criminal complaints against THOMAS and JAUME:

- THOMAS, 59, of Queens, is charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, and four counts each of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, class E felonies. Conviction of a class C felony can result in up to 15 years imprisonment. THOMAS received Section 8 subsidies administered by NYCHA between 2000 and 2007 for an apartment in Queens. DOI's investigation found that he concealed from NYCHA his wife's presence in the apartment and her income from the New York City Police Department's school safety division. As a result of THOMAS's failure to report that information, NYCHA overpaid approximately \$51,870 in rent subsidies between 2000 and 2007 for THOMAS.
- JAUME, 47, of Queens, is charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and three counts each of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, class E felonies. Conviction of a class D felony can result in up to seven years imprisonment. JAUME received Section 8 subsidies administered by NYCHA between 2003 and 2006 for an apartment in Queens. DOI's investigation found that she failed to report to NYCHA her son's income. From 2002 through 2005, JAUME's son was a carpenter at a private company,

resided in his mother's apartment, and earned between approximately \$8,760 and \$66,255 annually. As a result of JAUME'S failure to report that information, between 2003 and 2006, NYCHA overpaid approximately \$19,130 in rent subsidies for JAUME.

Since March 2008, DOI has arrested nine other individuals, including one City employee, in separate cases in which they are charged with concealing household income and stealing housing subsidies that in total exceeded \$115,000. The arrests are part of DOI's continuing effort to stem the theft of NYCHA subsidies.

Following are synopses of criminal charges against those nine individuals:

- BELKIS RAMIREZ, 44, of the Bronx, was indicted in March 2008 and charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, class D felonies, and nine counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. RAMIREZ is charged with knowingly submitting false documents to NYCHA and, between 1998 and 2007, stealing in excess of \$3,000 from NYCHA.
- JOHANNA CASAIGNE, 26, and MARIA GARCIA, 41, of the Bronx, were arrested in March 2008. Each has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, class D felonies; Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree and five counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all class E felonies; and three misdemeanors. Between 2001 and 2005, CASAIGNE and GARCIA resided in a NYCHA apartment in the Bronx. On affidavits submitted to NYCHA, GARCIA and CASAIGNE concealed CASAIGNE's employment and income and, as a result, between 2001 and 2006, defrauded NYCHA of approximately \$16,370 in rent.
- WANDA NARVAEZ, 38, of the Bronx, was arrested in April 2008 and has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and four counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. Between 2001 and 2004, NARVAEZ received Section 8 subsidies for an apartment in the Bronx and concealed her employment income with Consolidated Edison Company of New York, which ranged between \$20,545 and \$33,561 a year, and, as a result, NYCHA overpaid approximately \$24,345 in Section 8 rent subsidies for NARVAEZ.
- MARIA QUINONES, 47, of the Bronx, was arrested in April 2008 and has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and five counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. Between 2000 and 2005, QUINONES resided in a NYCHA apartment in the Bronx and concealed her employment income, which ranged between approximately \$12,000 and \$16,500 a year, and, as a result, defrauded NYCHA of approximately \$11,235 in rent.
- KIM SMALL, 36, of the Bronx, was arrested in April 2008 and has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and three counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. Between 2002 and 2005, SMALL resided in a NYCHA apartment in the Bronx, concealed her employment income as a certified nursing assistant, which ranged from \$2,887 to \$26,782 a year, and as a result, defrauded NYCHA of approximately \$17,000 in rent.
- MIRIAM PITTS, 57, of Queens, was arrested in April 2008 and has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and two counts each of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, class E felonies. Between 2000 and 2005, PITTS resided in a NYCHA apartment, concealed her employment income as a billing clerk at a medical office, which ranged from \$25,535 to \$34,012 a year, and, as a result, defrauded NYCHA of approximately \$19,770 in rent.
- DOLORES STEELE, 51, of the Bronx, was arrested this month and has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and six counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. STEELE received Section 8 benefits between 1999 and 2006 for a Bronx apartment and concealed her employment income with the City's Human Resources Administration ("HRA") and Department of Education ("DOE"), which ranged from \$12,111 to \$21,825 a year, and, as a result, NYCHA overpaid more than \$24,000 in Section 8 subsidies for STEELE.

- BOBBY BROWN, 43, of the Bronx, was arrested this month and has been charged with two counts Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and one count of Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree and two counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all class E felonies. BROWN resided in a NYCHA apartment in the Bronx between 2004 and 2006, concealed his employment income as a laborer for the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, which ranged from \$20,545 to \$34,719 a year, and, as a result defrauded NYCHA of more than \$3,000 in rent. In addition, BROWN also concealed his employment income from HRA and has been charged with defrauding that agency of more than \$20,000 in public benefits.

These investigations were conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Robert J. McSweeney and members of his staff, including Counsel to the Inspector General Kevin Smith; Deputy Inspectors General Anthony Capek and Bergia Telesford; Assistant Inspector General Rosemary Caruso; Chief Investigator Christopher France; Special Investigators Patricia Sedacca and Emily Bizzarro; Confidential Investigator Martin Lintner and Deputy Counsel Lauren Hintz.

The Office of Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the Queens cases, which have been assigned to Assistant District Attorney Rosemary Buccheri, under the supervision of Gregory Pavlides of the Economic Crimes Bureau.

The Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the Bronx cases, which are being supervised by Thomas Kapp, Chief of the Arson/Auto/Economic Crime Bureau.

Criminal complaints and indictments are merely 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.**