



The City of New York
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**A FORMER CITY EMPLOYEE AND HER HUSBAND ARE ORDERED TO REPAY THE CITY THE \$2.5 MILLION
TAKEN DURING A MAIL FRAUD AND MONEY LAUNDERING SCHEME**

RAIMMA TAGIEV, 33, a former City employee, and her husband, YAN BLINDER, 39, were each sentenced today to home confinement and five years of probation for their roles in the theft of \$2.5 million from the office of the City's Criminal Justice Coordinator ("CJC"), Assigned Counsel Plan. BLINDER was sentenced to 12 months, and TAGIEV to nine months, of home confinement. In addition, BLINDER must complete 500 hours of community service and TAGIEV must complete 300 hours of community service.

U.S. District Judge I. Leo Glasser, of the Eastern District of New York, ordered TAGIEV and BLINDER, both of Brooklyn, to repay the City \$2.5 million.

The two were arrested in late August 2003 and two months later pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering. The case was investigated jointly by the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI") and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division. The office of Benton J. Campbell, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, prosecuted the case.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "DOI's in-depth knowledge of City operations and our access to City agencies and records helped investigators expose the defendants' scheme, which cost the City \$2.5 million. DOI is gratified that today's sentencing includes the order of restitution of those much-needed funds. In addition, based on DOI's recommendations, the office of the Assigned Counsel Plan created an internal audit system and improved supervision of the payment process. This investigation demonstrates DOI's comprehensive and unique role, not only stopping the corruption but also fixing the vulnerabilities."

The investigation established that between February 2000 and August 2003 TAGIEV used her position as an Office Assistant with the CJC's Assigned Counsel Plan to cause the City to issue several hundred checks that totaled about \$2.5 million to fictitious recipients and that she, BLINDER and others shared in the proceeds. TAGIEV's job involved processing payment claims for legal services, expert witnesses or services provided to family court clients. TAGIEV, using the names of the fictitious recipients, created false payment claims for the supposed services, which were not provided. The checks were mailed to private mailboxes the defendants rented and controlled. BLINDER retrieved the fraudulent checks from those mailboxes. TAGIEV and BLINDER used the cash from the fraudulent checks to purchase property and pay for personal expenses.

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.