



The City of New York
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DOI STATEMENT ON ARREST AND INDICTMENT OF FORMER COUNSEL TO BRONX PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on the indictment unsealed today of MICHAEL M. LIPPMAN, former Counsel to the Bronx Public Administrator ("PA"), on felony charges of stealing and defrauding the PA's office and five decedents' estates of more than \$300,000 in excessive legal fees. The criminal charges stem from an investigation conducted jointly by DOI and the office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, which obtained the indictment. LIPPMAN, 65, of Scarsdale, NY, surrendered to DOI detectives this morning in the Bronx.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This experienced attorney is charged with abusing his position with a public office to extract excessive and unearned fees from the estates of deceased Bronx residents, according to the indictment. His charged systematic betrayal of the public trust was brought to light through the determined efforts of DOI investigators and the Bronx District Attorney's Office. I want to thank District Attorney Johnson and his staff for their diligent and professional work with DOI in pursuing this investigation and for bringing this important criminal prosecution."

LIPPMAN, an attorney since 1969, was Counsel to the Bronx Public Administrator's Office from 1983 until April 2009. He is charged with two counts of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, three counts of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, and four counts each of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, class E felonies, and with violating Section 2604 (b) (3) of the New York City Charter, which prohibits a public servant from using his position for personal gain, an unclassified misdemeanor. Upon conviction, a class C felony is punishable by up to 15 years' imprisonment, a class D felony by up to seven years' imprisonment, a class E felony by up to four years' imprisonment, and an unclassified misdemeanor by up to one year's imprisonment.

According to the charges, the investigation revealed that, between 2002 and the present, LIPPMAN engaged in a systematic ongoing scheme to defraud the Bronx Public Administrator's Office, as administrator for five estates, by drawing advance fees without court approval for work not performed and in amounts that exceeded the applicable limits imposed by the Guidelines of the Administrative Board for the Offices of the Public Administrators under Surrogate's Court Procedure Act, Section 1128.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Bronx Public Administrator Bonnie Gould and present Counsel to the Public Administrator, Reddy, Levy & Ziffer P.C., for their assistance in the investigation.

Assistant District Attorneys Maria C. Mostajo and Vanessa McEvoy and Deputy Bureau Chief, Stuart Levy, under the supervision of Thomas Leahy, Chief of the Rackets Bureau, of the Bronx District Attorney's Office, are assigned to the prosecution.

DOI's investigation was conducted by Special Investigator Floralba Paulino.

An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is 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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