



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

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

Release #64-2009
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JULY 2, 2009

CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

**DOI ARRESTS THREE INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH FALSELY IDENTIFYING
TWO SECTION 8 APPLICANTS AS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrests of three individuals on charges they submitted fraudulent Section 8 applications to the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA"), falsely identifying two applicants as domestic violence victims in unsuccessful efforts to obtain publicly-funded housing subsidies. DOI conducted the investigation based on a tip from NYCHA. The Office of the New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the cases.

NYCHA's Section 8 housing program has a waiting list of over 130,000 applicants who are seeking a subsidy to reside in a privately-owned apartment. Currently, NYCHA is only accepting applications for Section 8 benefits from three groups of individuals -- victims of domestic violence, referrals from the various City District Attorney's offices regarding members of the "Intimidated Witness Program," and referrals by the City Administration for Children's Services ("ACS") regarding individuals from the "Independent and Family Unification Programs."

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Falsely posing as a domestic violence victim to jump the line for housing subsidies is reprehensible. This charged conduct is not only criminal, but, if successful, would have harmed other applicants by depleting the City's already limited supply of housing funds. I commend the housing authority for reporting its suspicions to DOI, enabling our investigators to stop precious Section 8 benefits from getting into the wrong hands."

The following individuals were arrested late Wednesday afternoon, July 1, 2009:

- CHEVELLE RICHARDSON, 38, and her daughter, CHANDERA RICHARDSON, 20, both of the Bronx, were each charged with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor.
- BARBARA GOSS, 51, of Manhattan, has been charged with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the First Degree, a class C felony.

more

Upon conviction, a class C felony is punishable by up to 15 years in prison, a class E felony by up to four years in prison and a class A misdemeanor by up to a year's incarceration.

Victims of domestic violence who submit applications for Section 8 housing with NYCHA must also submit supporting documentation, such as an order of protection issued by the court, a police report or a hospital admission letter; and a letter indicating the individual has received victim advocacy services from a government agency such as ACS or a District Attorney's office, or a private organization that assists domestic violence victims, such as Safe Horizon.

DOI began its investigation after it was notified by NYCHA that some Section 8 applications it received appeared to include suspiciously similar information regarding the applicants' domestic violence status.

According to the criminal complaint, on January 29, 2009, an application for Section 8 housing was filed with NYCHA on behalf of CHANDERA RICHARDSON and included a Temporary Order of Protection, a New York City Police Department Domestic Incident Report and a letter from Safe Horizon, each purportedly showing that RICHARDSON was a victim of domestic violence. DOI's investigation found that CHEVELLE RICHARDSON obtained and altered those three documents, assisted CHANDERA RICHARDSON in filling out the application falsely, and then submitted the application and false documents for CHANDERA RICHARDSON with NYCHA.

According to the second criminal complaint, on March 10, 2009, an application for Section 8 housing with NYCHA was submitted on behalf of GOSS and included a Temporary Order of Protection, a New York City Police Department Domestic Incident Report and a letter from Safe Horizon, each purportedly showing that GOSS was a victim of domestic violence. DOI's investigation found that the application and supporting documents submitted by GOSS contained false information.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea and New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau and their staffs for their assistance in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of Inspector General for NYCHA under the supervision of Acting Inspector General Kelvin Jeremiah, and included members of his staff, Senior Deputy Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, Assistant Inspector General Suzanne Vitti, Chief Investigator John Reatz and Special Investigator Stephen Mattei.

The prosecution has been assigned to Senior Assistant District Attorney Stuart Silberg and Assistant District Attorney Albert Berry III of the New York County District Attorney's office.

Criminal complaints 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.

**Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the City, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.**