



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**STATEMENT FROM DOI ON GUILTY PLEA OF ROSA ABREU  
IN THEFT OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM CITY MEDICAL EXAMINER AFTER SEPTEMBER 11th**

Following the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), was suddenly called upon to investigate and create a computer system to track and identify forensic and other evidence collected as part of the effort to identify victims of the attacks. OCME received funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help pay for the system.

In December 2005, following over a year of covert investigation by the Department of Investigation (DOI), Rosa Abreu and Natarjan Venkataram were arrested and charged by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York with embezzling millions of dollars that had been provided to OCME, mostly by FEMA, by submitting invoices for goods and services that were never provided or by padding invoices for computer services and software purchased following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Abreu and Venkataram had been the Director of Records and the Director of Management Information Systems, respectively, of OCME.

Abreu yesterday pleaded guilty in federal court in Manhattan to conspiracy to commit embezzlement and money laundering charges relating to the FEMA funds as well as agency funds received prior to September 11<sup>th</sup> in connection with computer service contracts.

Abreu is scheduled to be sentenced on January 23, 2008. Under the sentencing guidelines, Abreu could face up to 75 years in prison.

DOI is gratified by the results in this prosecution and believes this should serve as a reminder to all those in City government who may be tempted to steal money from the City that DOI will investigate aggressively and refer for prosecution all those who engage in such conduct. This investigation would never have occurred but for the honest and perceptive employees at OCME who brought this matter to our attention.

DOI thanks the Office of Michael J. Garcia, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Assistant United States Attorneys Andrew Dember and Arlo Devlin-Brown of that office for the successful prosecution of this matter.

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