



The City of New York
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**STATEMENT FROM DOI COMMISSIONER ROSE GILL HEARN ON SENTENCING OF MAN WHO POSED
AS A CITY INSPECTOR AND STOLE MORE THAN \$5,000 FROM STORE OWNERS**

JOSEPH RIOS, a former General Vendor licensed with the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), was sentenced today in Brooklyn Criminal Court to three and one-half to seven years in jail after pleading guilty to stealing more than \$5,000 from four Brooklyn convenience store owners.

RIOS, 52, of Brooklyn, had been indicted and charged in April for allegedly posing as a DCA Tobacco Inspector in order to steal over \$5,250 in cash from four convenience stores in Brooklyn. To effect his scheme, RIOS pretended to be a DCA inspector, claimed to be either Mohammad Yusef or John Torres, and used what appeared to be a DCA identification card in order to gain access to restricted areas of the store, mainly behind the counter from where he stole cash.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "DOI blew away the smoke screen this defendant used in his scheme to steal money from unwitting store owners. Today's sentencing demonstrates that DOI can, will and does successfully investigate individuals who not only impersonate City inspectors but also try to extort or steal money from the public.

RIOS' criminal record includes a total of 19 convictions, including four felony convictions, one for Attempted Robbery in 1988, one for the Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in 1989, and two for Grand Larceny in 1994 and 2000, respectively. RIOS also has seven convictions for Criminal Impersonation.

This investigation was conducted by Assistant Commissioner and DCA Inspector General Robert Joyce, and members of his staff, including Assistant Inspector General Mary Kozlow, Confidential Investigator Anibal Lugo, and Special Investigator Don McNeil. The Office of the Kings County District Attorney is prosecuting the case and Assistant District Attorney Dan Blouin is handling the matter.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz and members of his staff for their cooperation and assistance during this investigation.

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.

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