



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

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

Release # 87-2006
nyc.gov/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2006

CONTACT: EMILY GEST
(212) 825-5931

DOI ARRESTS 8 BRONX RESIDENTS FOR STEALING MORE THAN \$133K IN HOUSING SUBSIDIES
- Arrests include employees from the Department of Education and the Health and Hospitals Corporation -

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of two New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents and six current/former Section 8 recipients for fraudulently receiving anywhere from \$5,200 to \$29,000 (a total of \$133,727), in rent subsidies for apartments located throughout the Bronx. These arrests took place yesterday and today. DOI is seeking three others.

The defendants have been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, they each face up to seven years in prison.

These arrests are part of an ongoing City-wide crackdown by DOI and New York area prosecutors that has resulted since 1995 in the arrest of 453 residents, including 144 City, State and Federal employees, who were charged with stealing nearly \$9 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. So far, 346 cases have resulted in convictions and nearly \$5 million in court-imposed restitution. Since January 2006, 44 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving nearly \$895,000 in government housing benefits.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Many of the individuals arrested today concealed their incomes in order to obtain/maintain housing benefits to which they were not entitled. In doing so, they may have deprived other citizens of affordable public housing. DOI will continue to strive to help the City ensure that much needed housing subsidies go to those who need them the most and not to those who underreport their incomes in order to pay less rent."

The defendants include:

VERONICA SERRANO, 38, a former Section 8 tenant at 1305 Sheridan Avenue, in the Morrisania section of the Bronx, has been charged with illegally obtaining \$29,249 in rental subsidies after allegedly concealing the income she earned as a receptionist in a medical office from 2000 to 2005. Instead of reporting that she earned anywhere from \$24,904 to \$29,120 a year on her 2001 through 2004 Affidavits of Income, SERRANO reported minimal public assistance as her sole source of household income. DOI investigators also determined that SERRANO allegedly submitted fraudulent documents to support her claim that she received minimal public assistance from 2001 through 2004. As a result, SERRANO paid monthly rent ranging between \$96 and \$153 when she should have been paying between \$614 and \$776 per month rent. In fact, SERRANO's employment income made her ineligible to receive any Section 8 subsidies after August 2001. SERRANO will also be charged with Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument.

SOL MARIA DATIS, 57, the tenant of record of a 3-room apartment in NYCHA's Bronxchester Houses located in the Melrose section of the Bronx, has been charged with illegally obtaining \$22,224 in housing benefits by failing to report on her 2002 through 2005 Affidavits of Income that her son lived with her and earned anywhere from \$11,716 and \$34,552 a year working as

a NYC Business Integrity Inspector. SOL DATIS claimed to NYCHA that she was the only tenant and that she lived on social security income. As a result, SOL DATIS paid \$134 to \$139 per month in rent when she should have paid between \$426 and \$1,003 per month.

DESIREE ROHAN, 41, a former Section 8 tenant at 1585 Odell Street in the Parkchester section of the Bronx, allegedly received \$20,410 in rent subsidies from May 2001 through March 2005 by concealing from NYCHA income she had earned as New York City school teacher and as a Residence Counselor with the Heritage, Health and Housing Inc. ("Heritage"), a not-for profit social service agency. DOI investigators determined that in 2001 and 2002, ROHAN failed to report \$20,000 she had earned at Heritage. In 2003, ROHAN reported to NYCHA that she had lost her teaching job, when, in fact, she was rehired as a substitute teacher three months after she had been laid off. Also in 2003, ROHAN claimed she had a new job at Heritage, even though she had been employed there since 2000. In 2004, ROHAN only reported income from one job, at the Department of Education. As a result of her under-reporting, ROHAN paid monthly rent ranging from \$138 to \$756, when she should have paid between \$368 and \$1,038 per month. Had ROHAN reported both incomes accurately, she would not have been entitled to the \$19,186 in subsidies she received after May 2002.

RUSHEDA HOWARD, 32, a Section 8 tenant in a 3-room apartment located at 2051 Grand Concourse, in the Mount Eden section of the Bronx, allegedly concealed from NYCHA more than \$78,000 in employment income she earned from 1999 through 2003. As a result, HOWARD received \$18,022 in housing benefits to which she was not entitled. On Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 2000 to 2004, HOWARD reported welfare as her sole source of household income and only paid \$96 to \$123 a month in rent. DOI investigators determined, however, that HOWARD had been employed by the Helmsley Park Lane Hotel as a Telephone Operator from September 1999 to February 2004 and earned between \$17,553 and \$32,629 a year. Had HOWARD reported her true income to NYCHA, she would have paid anywhere from \$521 to \$766 a month in rent.

YANIVA RAMOS, 31, a Section 8 tenant in a 4-room apartment at 2064 Vyse Avenue, in the Tremont section of the Bronx, has been charged with illegally obtaining \$5,244 in rent subsidies from April 2004 through June 2005. RAMOS, a NYC Health and Hospital Corp. ("HHC") employee since August 2002, falsely reported to NYCHA that she had been terminated from her position as a Clerical Associate at Harlem Hospital in September 2003, and that she was working at Time Warner Cable earning \$129 per week. DOI Investigators determined, however, that RAMOS was never terminated from her employment with HHC, where she earned \$17,923 in 2003 and \$31,585 in 2004, and has not been employed with Time Warner Cable since August 2002, when she started her employment with the City's HHC. As a result of RAMOS' actions, she paid anywhere from \$81 to \$118 per month in rent when she should have been paying between \$366 and \$726.

PAMELA FRAZIER, 43, a former Section 8 tenant at 1265 Walton Ave., in the Concourse section of the Bronx, allegedly concealed from NYCHA, since November 2002, her employment with the Young Adult Institute ("YAI") where she works as a Counselor earning between \$33,033 and \$40,928 a year. Instead, on her yearly Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA in 2003 and 2004, FRAZIER reported earning minimal wages of approximately \$3,800 per year working at a hair salon located on E. 174th Street in the Bronx. DOI Investigators determined, however, that the address FRAZIER provided for the hair salon was actually the location of a grocery store that has been at that location for the past five years. Due to FRAZIER's concealment of her YAI income, NYCHA undercharged FRAZIER \$14,297 for her rent from April 2003 through March 2006. FRAZIER's monthly rent payments ranged between \$52 and \$96 per month when she should have paid between \$348 and \$528 per month.

MARIBEL RODRIGUEZ, 47, a former Section 8 tenant at 2770 Briggs Ave., in the Fordham section of the Bronx, has been charged with illegally obtaining \$12,736 in rent subsidies by concealing her husband's presence in the apartment and the income he earned as a bus driver with the MTA/New York City Transit Authority. On Affidavits of Income RODRIGUEZ filed with NYCHA in 2003 and 2004, RODRIGUEZ listed herself and her three sons as the sole occupants of the household and claimed her only income was \$650 in monthly child support. RODRIGUEZ failed to disclose to NYCHA that her husband Silvano has been living with her since 2003, and that he earns between \$62,449 and \$64,465 a year from his employment with the MTA. Had RODRIGUEZ reported that Silvano lived with her, she would have paid between \$773 and \$823 per month in rent, instead of the \$121 per month she actually paid. In fact, had she reported her husband and his income, she would not have been entitled to any of the \$12,736.56 in rent subsidies she received from March 2004 through September 2005.

BIBIANO VALERIO, 41, the tenant of record at a 3-room apartment in NYCHA's Andrew Jackson Houses located in the Melrose section of the Bronx, allegedly failed to report that, since 2002, her husband lived with her and earned approximately \$23,011 to \$29,394 per year. VALERIO also failed to report her own employment with the Puerto Rican Home Attendant Services, where she worked as a Home Attendant earning approximately \$12,731 to \$27,898 per year. Instead, VALERIO told NYCHA from 2002 to 2005 that she and her daughter were the sole occupants of the apartment and her only income was public

assistance. VALERIO paid \$117 per month in rent when she should have paid \$421 per month, the maximum rent for an apartment that size. As a result, VALERIO's actions caused NYCHA to be defrauded of \$11,544 in rental subsidies.

These investigations were conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and NYCHA Supervising Inspector General Vincent E. Green and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspectors General Kevin Smith, Ralph Iannuzzi, and Bergia Telesford, First Assistant Inspector General James Hylton, Assistant Inspectors General Anthony Capek and Rosemary Caruso, Chief Investigators Christopher France and Martina Mercaldo, Special Investigators Patricia Carvajal and Emily Bizzarro, Confidential Investigators Andre Gorelkin and Lia J. Pasichow and Deputy Counsel Laureen Hintz.

The Office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting these cases.

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) 825-5955***