



The City of New York
Department of Investigation
ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

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

Release #88-2010
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2010

CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

DOI ARRESTS MOTHER AND DAUGHTER IN SEPARATE HOUSING FRAUD SCAMS
--Daughter charged with filing false domestic violence reports to obtain section 8 housing subsidies--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrests of a New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") tenant and her daughter, a Section 8 recipient, in separate housing fraud cases. ERICA MITCHELL has been charged with filing falsified domestic violence reports with NYCHA to fraudulently obtain approximately \$30,000 in Section 8 subsidies, and her mother, PATRICIA MITCHELL, has been charged with defrauding NYCHA of approximately \$2,424 by concealing her income. The office of New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. is prosecuting the cases.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Falsely claiming to be a victim of domestic violence to obtain housing subsidies is a contemptible abuse of the City's efforts to assist crime victims. As charged, these defendants made housing fraud a family affair. Any individual who conceals income or falsifies information intentionally to illegally obtain public housing funds will be exposed and prosecuted."

ERICA MITCHELL, 25, of the Bronx, New York, has been charged Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison.

PATRICIA MITCHELL, 44, of NYCHA's Harlem River Houses in Manhattan, New York, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, class E felonies. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison.

NYCHA's Section 8 housing program has a waiting list of over 125,000 applicants who are seeking a subsidy to reside in privately-owned apartments. Currently, NYCHA is not accepting any section 8 applications. Up until December 2009, victims of domestic violence received priority status when applying for Section 8 housing with NYCHA and were required to submit supporting documentation, such as an order of protection issued by the court, a police report or a hospital admission letter.

According to the criminal complaint, DOI's investigation found that ERICA MITCHELL submitted an application to NYCHA to receive Section 8 subsidies, and falsely indicated she was a victim of domestic violence and provided false domestic incident reports and a temporary order of protection. As a result of those misrepresentations, the defendant defrauded NYCHA between September 2006 and December 2010 of approximately \$30,000 in Section 8 subsidies.

DOI's investigation also found that PATRICIA MITCHELL was a City housing authority tenant and failed to report to NYCHA her income from her work as an Informal Child Care Provider. As a result of this misrepresentation, PATRICIA MITCHELL defrauded NYCHA between 2009 and 2010 in excess of \$1,000.

An Informal Child Care Provider is an unlicensed, unregistered caregiver of no more than two unrelated children who receives payment through the City Administration for Children's Services ("ACS").

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., NYCHA Chairman John B. Rhea, and ACS Commissioner John B. Mattingly and their staffs for their assistance in the investigation.

more

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Inspector General for NYCHA Kelvin Jeremiah, and members of his staff, including Senior Deputy Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, Assistant Inspector General Suzanne Vitti, and Chief Investigators Stephen Mattei and John Reatz.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Stuart Silberg of the New York County District Attorney's Office has been assigned to prosecute 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.

**DOI's press releases can also be found at twitter.com/doinews
Get the worms out of the Big Apple. To report someone ripping off the City, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.**