

Press  
Release

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**CITY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
SUPERVISOR AND TWO ACCOMPLICES INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY  
ACCEPTING BRIBES FROM PEOPLE SEEKING SECTION 8 HOUSING BENEFITS -  
GRAND JURY ALSO INDICTS SIXTEEN FOR ALLEGEDLY PAYING THE BRIBES**

**Public  
Information**

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Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson and New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn announced today that a joint corruption investigation involving the Section 8 Housing Program, has resulted in the indictment and arrest of 19 people including a supervisor at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

A grand jury indicted, Joba Cottoreal, of the Bronx, 26 counts of Bribe Receiving in the 3rd degree, a Class D felony offense punishable by a maximum sentence of up to 7 years imprisonment and 47 counts Falsifying Business Records in the 1st degree, a Class E felony offense punishable by a maximum sentence of up to 4 years imprisonment. Arelis Peralta, 39, and Damaris Peralta, 41, both of Stamford, Connecticut, were charged with multiple counts of Bribe Receiving in the 3rd degree and are facing a maximum sentence of up to 7 years imprisonment if convicted. The grand jury charged sixteen other individuals with Bribery in the 3rd degree. These defendants are facing up to 4 years imprisonment if found guilty of this Class E felony offense.

**Robert T.  
Johnson  
District  
Attorney**

It is alleged that between June 1, 2003 and August 1, 2006, Cottoreal, a supervisor at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, "acting in concert" with Arelis and Damaris Peralta as her agents, solicited and accepted bribes ranging anywhere from \$3,000 to \$7,000 from applicants seeking Section 8 Housing Subsidies. Once the bribes were paid, Cottoreal allegedly would alter computerized records of applicants on the waiting list for Section 8 Housing. It is alleged that the name of the person who paid the bribe would be substituted for the name of someone else who had filled out the required paperwork for the program and was waiting to receive Section 8 benefits. Those who paid the bribes would then be placed in Section 8 housing based on eligibility information that belonged to someone else.

The scheme began to unravel when the New York City Department of Investigation began looking into the Section 8 program in September 2005 after receiving an anonymous tip that someone had paid a bribe in order to move into an apartment through the federally funded Section 8 housing program.

The case is being prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Miriam Bell-Blair and Assistant District Attorney Jessica Lupo of the Arson/Auto/Economic Crimes Bureau.

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