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**KINGS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY CHARLES J. HYNES, NYC  
DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION COMMISSIONER ROSE GILL  
HEARN AND NYC HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION  
COMMISSIONER VERNA EGGLESTON ANNOUNCE ARREST AND  
INDICTMENT OF HRA EMPLOYEE WHO STOLE  
EMERGENCY FUNDS**

*DEFENDANT RICHARD BROWN TRANSFERRED MONEY INTO FOUR ACQUAINTANCES'  
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTS*

**Brooklyn, February 17, 2005** – Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes, New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn and New York City Human Resources Administration Commissioner Verna Eggleston today announced the arrest and indictment of Richard Brown, 44, for electronically stealing \$15,896 in Immediate Needs funds from NYC HRA's Greenwood Job Center located at 275 Bergen Street in Brooklyn. The arrest of the other four co-defendants are imminent. All five defendants will be charged with Grand Larceny. If convicted, Brown could face a maximum of seven years in prison. The other defendants face either a maximum of four years or seven years in prison.

For the past six years (since July 1998), Brown has worked as a supply room clerk at the Greenwood Center. Investigations revealed that in September 2003, Mr. Brown offered his data entry skills to help process welfare cases. For the next eight months, Brown made over 50 electronic transfers into the four co-defendants' public assistance accounts, the indictment charges.

Brown's scheme began with a few unauthorized electronic issuances of \$51, later growing to numerous transfers of \$500 in funds. In January 2004, Brown's illicit data entry work was transferring \$254 every three or four days to his female co-defendants. In a single week in May 2004, Brown transferred \$4,000 of public funds to co-defendants. Ultimately, each codefendant pocketed between \$1,700 and \$6,300 in cash, in addition to their legitimate public assistance monies.

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Typically an active welfare recipient like these codefendants would only qualify for a small amount of Immediate Needs funds after personally explaining their dire circumstances, and have an additional \$20 or \$30 placed in their individual public assistance accounts to be withdrawn similar to a common Bank Debit Card by the recipient.

Brown's role in this plot involved keying in a co-defendant's HRA ID number along with varying issuance amounts into the HRA computer that electronically transfers funds from the HRA general funds into each co-defendant's welfare account. To coordinate the scheme, Brown called co-defendants after making the transfers and detailed the amounts and time of day their ill-gotten funds would become available for withdrawal. Then, the co-defendants would withdraw the funds almost always within 12 hours of the transfer and convert it to cash at an ATM or a check cashing establishment. In exchange, it is charged that the co-defendants would give cash gifts to Brown.

DOI's investigation began after HRA reported that the amounts of Immediate funds were excessively larger than normal to one particular client. DOI determined that the clients who were receiving the monies were not clients of that particular center where Brown worked. When the scheme was unraveled, Brown was relieved of his computer duties. He was arrested this morning.

District Attorney Charles J. Hynes said, "It was obvious that there was fraudulent activity in this case based on the exorbitant funds that were received. This is another case of greedy individuals trying to defraud the system and take away money from people who need it. These suspects have been stealing money from the public. The arrests demonstrate our commitment to cracking down on scams that rip off the honest taxpayers."

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "By taking money they didn't deserve, all of the defendants in this case took money that could have gone to others who needed it even more. They should have known that public assistance is for the needy but not the greedy. DOI and its partners in government will make every effort to ensure that tax payers' money will go to those who need more not those who want more. Congratulations to the investigators and all those involved for putting together a great case."

HRA Administrator/Commissioner Verna Eggleston said, "In the extremely rare cases where Human Resources Administration/Dept.of Social Services employees breach the public trust, we have the techniques and technology to find out quickly and report it immediately to the proper authority,"

The case is being prosecuted by Senior Investigative Attorney Frank Dudis and Bureau Chief Lauren Mack from the Public Assistance Crimes Unit of the Kings County District Attorney's Office.

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