



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI INVESTIGATION LEADS TO ARREST OF CITY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION EMPLOYEE
FOR ALLEGEDLY STEALING MORE THAN \$30,000 IN CONTRACT PAYMENTS**

Margaret Garnett, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), in partnership with Queens County Acting District Attorney John M. Ryan, announced today the arrest of NICOLE GAMORY, a Community Associate with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"), for allegedly using her position with DPR to execute contracts to divert into her own bank accounts more than \$30,000 in payments she collected from clients reserving event space in a Queens park. DOI was notified of the allegations by the Parks Advocate Office, which had received a complaint from the Forest Park Trust ("FPT"), which is a nonprofit organization that supports and maintains various programs in Forest Park. The Queens County District Attorney's Office is prosecuting the case.

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, "This defendant was entrusted with payments from clients looking to reserve a singular experience for joyous milestones, including birthday celebrations and wedding receptions, and instead, crashed their parties by allegedly pocketing the funds, according to the charges. DOI thanks the Queens District Attorney's Office for their partnership and prosecution of this case and the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Forest Park Trust for bringing this matter to DOI."

Queens County Acting District Attorney John M. Ryan said, "Our community parks are there for everyone to enjoy for everyday recreation as well as special occasions. Money collected for events is supposed to support the Forest Park Trust, instead this employee allegedly decided to funnel deposits to her own bank accounts. This kind of conduct is unacceptable. I want to thank the DOI for their commitment to uncovering criminal activity wherever it occurs. This office will continue to work with our law enforcement colleagues to weed out corruption and hold all those who would cheat the system accountable."

GAMORY, 44, of Brooklyn, NY, was arrested today, June 20, 2019, and charged with one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and three counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, both class D felonies; 12 counts of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a class E felony, and one count of Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison, and a class A misdemeanor is punishable by up to a year's incarceration.

GAMORY has been employed by DPR as a Community Associate since December 2005 and receives an annual base salary of approximately \$59,363. She was suspended immediately after her arrest.

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, GAMORY was employed by DPR to execute contracts for the rental of the Oak Ridge building in Forest Park on behalf of FPT for social events including weddings and birthday parties. According to the charges, between approximately February 2014 and June 2018 GAMORY allegedly steered 54 client payments from 36 events contracted by Forest Park Trust into bank accounts that she controlled through certified

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checks and money orders that were provided to her as deposits to reserve the event space, additional payments towards the balance on contracts and other payments. In total, \$30,911 in fees and payments were allegedly diverted into GAMORY's bank accounts. In some cases, the original payee's name was altered to GAMORY, or GAMORY's name was later added as the payee, where the payee's name had originally been left blank.

GAMORY was also responsible for recording these contract payments in a ledger kept in Oak Ridge, however, during interviews with Forest Park staff, investigators learned that the original ledger has been missing since the defendant last worked at Oak Ridge and that GAMORY was the last person to be in possession of the book. A photocopy of the ledger book maintained at the FPT office and reviewed by DOI failed to show entries for multiple payments made by clients for their events.

The investigation found a pattern of similar activity in the defendant's bank accounts consisting of client deposits and payments for rentals at Oak Ridge that should have been deposited into FPT's bank account but were instead deposited into the defendant's banks accounts, including the following six incidents:

- A client contracted in March 2015 with Oak Ridge for a Sweet Sixteen event and submitted the following payments to the defendant: a \$400 deposit, a security deposit of \$800 and the contract balance of \$1,050. The \$400 was properly deposited into the Forest Park Trust account. The investigation found that three payments from the client that equaled the security deposit and contract balance had been deposited into the defendant's personal bank account. In addition, FPT bank records indicated that the value of the \$800 security deposit was returned to the client when it was actually deposited into the defendant's bank account.
- A client contracted with Oak Ridge for a wedding reception in December 2016, submitted a \$400 deposit and five other payments, which included an \$800 security deposit to the defendant. Two payments, totaling \$1,150 were properly deposited, while four remaining money orders, totaling \$1,936 were deposited into the defendant's personal bank account. The investigation reviewed the FPT ledger book, which only included the client's payments that were properly deposited not the payments that were deposited into the defendant's bank account. In addition, FPT bank records indicated that the value of the \$800 security deposit was returned to the client when it was actually deposited into the defendant's bank account. The photocopied FPT ledger reviewed by investigators does not reflect the payments deposited into the defendant's bank account.
- A client contracted with Oak Ridge for a birthday party in July 2016 and submitted a \$400 deposit and then two other payments in the amount of \$1,050 and \$800. The investigation found that the \$400 was properly deposited but three payments totaling the \$1,050 and \$800 were deposited into the defendant's bank account and the FPT ledger failed to show any of the payments from the client. In addition, FPT bank records indicated that the value of the \$800 security deposit was returned to the client when it was actually deposited into the defendant's bank account.
- A client contracted with Oak Ridge for a wedding ceremony in August 2016 and submitted to the defendant a \$500 money order and later another \$500 money order in connection with the security deposit. While the security deposit was properly deposited, the other \$500 money order was deposited into the defendant's bank account and the payee line was altered to be made payable to the defendant instead of FPT. In addition, the FPT ledger book failed to include the two money orders submitted by the client.
- A client contracted with Oak Ridge in October 2016 for a birthday party and submitted a \$400 deposit by money order, an \$850 payment by money order and a \$800 security deposit. The investigation found that the \$800 security deposit and the \$400 money were actually deposited into the defendant's personal bank account. In addition, the payee line on the \$400 money order was altered to be made payable to the defendant instead of FPT. In addition, the FPT ledger book failed to include an entry for the client's \$800 security deposit.
- A client contracted in June 2017 with Oak Ridge for a ceremony and provided a \$500 money order and subsequent \$500 money order for a security deposit. The investigation found that the initial \$500 money order was deposited into the defendant's personal bank account and the payee line was altered to be made payable to the defendant. In addition, the FPT ledger failed to include the initial \$500 payment from the client.

Commissioner Garnett thanked Queens County Acting District Attorney John M. Ryan and his staff for their prosecution of this matter and DPR Commissioner Mitchell Silver and his staff for their cooperation in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DPR, specifically Special Investigator Anastasia Plakas and Data Analyst Natalie Lin under the supervision of Assistant Inspector General Michael Morris, Deputy Inspector General David Jordan, Inspector General Ann Petterson, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella, and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Yvonne Francis, assigned to the Integrity Bureau under Bureau Chief James M. Liander in the Queens County District Attorney's Office, is prosecuting the case.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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 strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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