



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

**TWO FORMER MORTUARY TECHNICIANS OF NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF
CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER CHARGED WITH STEALING DECEDENTS'
PROPERTY**

***Mortuary Technicians Allegedly Stole Credit and Debit Cards of Decedents and
Made Thousands of Dollars of Unauthorized Purchases***

Two criminal complaints were unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging Charles McFadgen and Willie Garcon with access device fraud for using credit and debit cards that belonged to decedents whose bodies were in the care and custody of the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner ("OCME"). McFadgen and Garcon were arrested this morning and are scheduled to make their initial appearances this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Roanne L. Mann.

Mark J. Lesko, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI); and Margaret Garnett, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced the arrests and charges.

"As alleged, the defendants, as mortuary technicians employed by New York City's OCME, had a solemn duty to care for the bodies of the deceased and treat their personal effects with the utmost respect. Instead, the defendants brazenly pilfered the belongings of the deceased, stole their property and enriched themselves by making unauthorized purchases worth several thousand dollars," stated Acting United States Attorney Lesko. "These arrests serve as a warning to corrupt city employees that they will be prosecuted and held accountable for their criminal acts and breach of public trust."

"Government employees, regardless of their position, are supposed to serve their fellow citizens, not steal from them. The alleged behavior of these two former medical examiner office employees stripped families of the dignity they expected to be afforded to their deceased family members, and it broke federal law. Today's charges serve as a reminder that there are consequences for illegal behavior," stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Sweeney.

“As representatives of the City's Office of Chief Medical Examiner, these defendants should have provided compassion, dignity, and respect for the deceased New Yorkers they were serving. Instead, they exploited the access of their positions and breached the trust the City placed in them by stealing from the dead, according to the charges. DOI thanks the NYPD, FBI and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York for working together to expose the corruption and bring accountability to this charged conduct. Individuals who have experienced similar issues with theft from deceased loved ones are encouraged to make a report to DOI's Office of Inspector General for OCME at (212) 825-5904,” stated DOI Commissioner Garnett.

Garcon Complaint:

Garcon was employed at the OCME between May 2018 and July 2020 as a forensic mortuary technician. His duties included transporting the bodies of decedents from the location of death to the OCME. Garcon was simultaneously employed by the Burlington County Medical Examiner’s Office from February 2020 to May 21, 2020. In May 2020, Garcon was arrested by state authorities in New Jersey and found in possession of property that belonged to four decedents who died in New York City and whose bodies had been placed in the OCME’s custody. According to the OCME’s records, Garcon was assigned to transport the bodies of three of those decedents and was working as an autopsy technician at the OCME in New York when the body of the fourth decedent arrived there. A subsequent investigation revealed that Garcon made nearly \$6,500 in unauthorized purchases, including airline travel from Newark to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, using credit and debit cards that belonged to the four decedents.

McFadgen Complaint:

McFadgen was employed at the OCME as a mortuary technician between October 2003 and July 2016 when he retired. McFadgen admitted to investigators that both during and after his employment at the OCME, he used debit and credit cards that he knew had been stolen. McFadgen made more than \$13,500 in unauthorized purchases using debit and credit cards stolen from five decedents whose bodies were in the OCME’s custody.

The charges in the complaints are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum of 10 years’ imprisonment.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Public Integrity Section. Special Assistant United States Attorney Virginia Nguyen is in charge of the prosecution.

The Defendants:

CHARLES MCFADGEN
Age: 66
Bronx, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 21-MJ-378

WILLIE GARCON
Age: 50
Brooklyn, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 21-MJ-379