



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #006-99

DOI ARRESTS EX-PARALEGAL AT CITY LAW DEPARTMENT FOR \$3,500 PAYROLL CHECK FRAUD

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1999 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of BRENDA HAWTHORNE, a temporary service worker formerly employed as a paralegal with the New York City Law Department, for stealing more than \$3,500 in salary by submitting to her employment agency 14 time sheets, which contained the forged signature of an Assistant Corporation Counsel.

Commissioner Kuriansky explained that during a review of temporary service invoices, the Law Department noted that BRENDA HAWTHORNE, a paralegal employed by Mademoiselle Temps, Inc., a Manhattan-based employment agency, kept appearing on invoices as working at the Law Department even though she had been terminated months earlier due to poor performance. The Law Department immediately referred the matter to DOI.

According to the Felony Complaint, HAWTHORNE was assigned to the Law Department's Affirmative Litigation Division for two months, from November 1997 until January 1998, when her services were terminated. From January 20 to May 19, 1998, it is alleged, HAWTHORNE made it appear to Mademoiselle Temps, Inc., that she was still employed at the Law Department by calling in her hours and submitting 14 attendance sheets purportedly signed by the Deputy Chief of the Affirmative Litigation Division. As a result of her deception, HAWTHORNE was improperly paid \$3,558 by Mademoiselle Temps, Inc.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his appreciation to Mademoiselle Temps, Inc., for its cooperation during the course of the investigation.

HAWTHORNE, 38, of Queens, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Forgery in the Third Degree. If convicted, she faces up to 7 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Sam Amorese, DOI's Inspector General for the Law Department, and members of his staff, in particular, Special Investigator Michael Corrigan. Special Investigator Esther T. Bluett and Detective Lyn Silver-Meriwether, of the DOI Investigative Squad, assisted in the investigation. The Office of the Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Juan Merchan is handling the matter.