



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 30, 2015
Contact [John Milgrim](#): 518-474-1010

SUPERVISOR OF STATE GROUP HOMES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED CHARGED WITH STEALING IDENTITY OF RESIDENT IN HER CARE

CENTRAL ISLIP - New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas J. Spota announced the arrest of a supervisor of seven Long Island group homes for the developmentally disabled for identity theft in connection with her alleged use of a service recipient's personal information to obtain electric utility service for her own home.

Blossom Officer Thame, 55, of, Ridge, New York was arrested on one count of Identify Theft in the Second Degree, a class E Felony. Thame is employed as a Treatment Team Leader for the State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

The arrest follows an investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott's office that revealed that Thame used her position as Treatment Team Leader to gain access to a service recipient's name and personal information which she then used to open a PSE&G electricity account at her personal residence. The investigation determined Thame, since early March 2014, received more than \$1,400 worth of electric utility service at her residence using the name and information of the service recipient.

Separately, On April 3, 2015, Thame was charged with allegedly providing false information on an application for a New York State Driver License. She was charged with one count of Offering a False Instrument for Filing, a class E Felony. In that matter, Thame allegedly applied for a second license using the name "Blossom M. Officer-Thame" and failed to disclose that her license under the name "Blossom Thame" had been suspended. The case remains pending.

Inspector General Leahy Scott said, "This employee took advantage of an individual she was tasked to protect and care for, violating her professional responsibilities and violating the public's trust, and she will be held accountable for her actions."

District Attorney Spota said, "The investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott's office uncovered this appalling scheme to exploit the vulnerability of a developmentally disabled person – a crime that this defendant will be formally charged with at her arraignment in a few weeks' time. Inspector General Leahy Scott and her team did a thorough job establishing the facts of this crime and our office will continue to work with the Inspector General as we move toward trial."

At the time Thame allegedly stole the service recipient's identity, she was responsible for seven sites that are operated by OPWDD, five Independent residence alternatives (IRA's) and two Independent care facilities (ICF's). The facilities housed 57 service recipients. Since late March, Thame has been out on administrative leave.

Thame is due to be arraigned in Suffolk County First District Court on August 25.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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