



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the New York State Welfare Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 19, 2017
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PRIOR CONVICTED FELON ARRESTED AS SERIAL WELFARE CHEAT

NEW YORK CITY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the arrest of a recently convicted New York City welfare cheat on charges he again fraudulently assumed the identity of a man he met decades ago in order to steal thousands of dollars in welfare benefits he was not entitled to.

Adolphis Dukeshire, 48, of Manhattan, was charged with two counts of Identity Theft in the First Degree, and one count each of Forgery in the Second Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, all felonies.

Just two years ago, following a previous investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott, Dukeshire pleaded guilty and admitted in court to stealing more than \$80,000 in Temporary Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medicaid benefits between 2003 and 2013 by assuming the identity of an Albany man he met in New York City more than 20 years ago. The man was unaware Dukeshire was using his identity to obtain public assistance benefits. Subsequent to that plea, Dukeshire was allowed to forego criminal sentencing by entering a judicial diversion program.

An more recent investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that by late 2016, just over a year after his previous guilty plea, Dukeshire was again assuming the same false identity he previously used in order to steal more than \$3,700 in additional welfare benefits on top of the benefits he was already entitled to and receiving under his own name. The fraudulent identity he was using belonged to a man serving a life sentence for a 2014 murder conviction in Albany, and who is serving a prison term in which he will not be eligible for parole until 2038.

“Soon after this defendant admitted to a 10-year-scheme stealing more than \$80,000 in welfare benefits and winning a diversion from a prison sentence, he had the gall to perpetrate the very same ruse using the same fake identity as before,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “To think he could revert to the same scheme he previously used was brazen and foolish, and showed utter disregard for the criminal justice system. I will continue to relentlessly pursue and bring to justice anyone who cheats the welfare system.”

“We have a responsibility to ensure that tax dollars are properly managed and this case exemplifies how agencies can work together to combat fraud and abuse,” said New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA) **Commissioner Steven Banks**. “We appreciate the work of the New York State Welfare Inspector General’s Office to ensure that resources are not wasted and benefits go to New Yorkers in need.”

The state welfare programs from which Dukeshire fraudulently received benefits include Medicaid, which is available to income-qualifying New Yorkers who are unable to pay for medical care; Temporary Assistance, which provides temporary cash assistance for those who are unable to work, cannot find a job, or whose job

income is insufficient to meet cost-of-living expenses; and SNAP (also known as food stamps), a federally funded program which provides benefits to help low-income New Yorkers feed their families.

Dukeshire was arraigned today in New York County Criminal Court and bail was set at \$75,000. He was remanded to jail pending further court action.

The Inspector General thanked the New York County District Attorney Cyrus Vance and his office for their assistance with the prosecution of this case, as well as the New York City Human Resources Administration for their assistance with the investigation.

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

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The New York State Office of the Welfare Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse or illegal acts committed against public assistance programs designed to help those in need. Our office also investigates complaints about the agencies and local social services districts who administer social services programs. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form: <http://www.ig.ny.gov> or sending an email to: inspector.general@ig.ny.gov. You also can write to our office at: Office of the Welfare Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor Albany, New York 12223