



NEWS RELEASE

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

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QUEENS MAN WHO IMPERSONATED DECEASED TWIN BROTHER SENTENCED FOR THEFT OF WELFARE BENEFITS

NEW YORK CITY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the sentencing of a New York City sanitation worker from Queens who defrauded city, state and federal agencies of more than \$580,000 in welfare benefits from 1994 to 2013 by impersonating his deceased twin brother.

Thomas Murphy, 55, of the Rockaways in Queens, was sentenced today to a three-year conditional discharge. The sentencing today follows Murphy's January guilty plea to the crimes of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, both felonies. Court-ordered judgments for the full amount of the fraud were ordered against Murphy at the time of his guilty plea.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found Murphy committed this fraud by using the social security number of his deceased twin brother, Robert, who passed away in 1962 shortly after his birth. Murphy began using his brother's social security number in October 1994, when he applied for social service benefits in his brother's name. Murphy continued to impersonate his brother for more than 18 years, and collected public benefits through November 2013.

The Inspector General's investigation confirmed that Murphy was otherwise ineligible for the public benefits he received. As an employee of the New York City Department of Sanitation since 2006, Murphy recently earned an annual salary of approximately \$72,000 and therefore would have been unqualified to receive the benefits.

In an effort to conceal his dual identity, Murphy – a lifelong Queens resident – maintained separate addresses and bank accounts in both his and his deceased brother's names. Murphy also had a New York State commercial driver license, and obtained a separate driver license in his deceased brother's name. As a result of Murphy's long-term fraud he obtained a total of \$581,805.80 in public assistance benefits, as follows: \$216,481.80 from Medicaid, \$15,024 from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP" or food stamps), \$209,902 in state rental subsidies, and \$140,398 from the Social Security Administration ("SSA").

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, the SSA and the New York City Human Resources Administration for their assistance with the investigation. She also thanked Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown and his staff for prosecuting the case.

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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