



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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NEW YORK STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCES ARREST OF RIVERBANK STATE PARK EMPLOYEE FOR ALLEGEDLY STEALING MORE \$75,000 IN STATE FUNDS

New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the arrest of a Riverbank State Park cashier who is accused of stealing \$75,000 from the park between 2009 and 2011.

Fatima Cooper, 47, of Manhattan was charged with one count of Second Degree Grand Larceny. The arrest of Cooper was the result of a joint investigation by the Inspector General and the Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding internal financial controls at the park.

“For the second time this year an employee who was responsible for collecting fees from park goers at Riverbank State Park has been charged with pocketing significant amounts of the proceeds,” said Inspector General Scott. “This represents a serious lack of financial controls at this park. I will continue to assist the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to review and strengthen their financial controls in order to protect this popular destination and safeguard New York’s assets.”

Cooper appeared for arraignment before the Hon. Robert Mandelbaum of Manhattan Criminal Court. She is due to reappear in court December 13.

Cooper allegedly took cash from a register used to collect fees from arriving park goers. Just last month, as the result of an investigation by the Inspector General, another Riverbank employee was [sentenced](#) to prison for stealing from the park in a similar scheme.

Riverbank Park, which first opened in 1993, is a popular “rooftop” park on the upper west side of Manhattan. It attracts 2.5 million visitors a year and generates more than a million dollars in annual revenue.

Inspector General Scott thanked the New York Police Department and the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office for their assistance in the investigation, and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. for prosecuting this case. The Defendant is considered innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

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