



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Letizia Tagliafierro

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INSPECTOR GENERAL TAGLIAFIERRO ANNOUNCES ARRESTS IN RAMAPO OF TWO INDIVIDUALS WHO SEPARATELY STOLE MORE THAN A TOTAL OF \$20,500 IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS

Two Separate Arrests in Ramapo: Former MTA Bus Driver Collected More Than \$11,000 In Benefits While Coaching High School Basketball Team; Rockland Bakery Delivery Driver Arrested for Collecting \$9,500 In Workers' Compensation Benefits While Also Working at Area Jewelry Stores

RAMAPO – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro announced the separate arrests of two Hudson Valley individuals who allegedly defrauded the workers' compensation system of a total of more than \$20,500:

- A former MTA bus driver who claimed he was unable to work due to an on-the-job injury but was coaching a high school basketball team while collecting more than \$11,000 in workers' compensation benefits
- A Rockland-based bakery delivery truck driver who allegedly collecting more than \$9,500 in benefits while continuing to work at several area jewelry stores.

MTA BUS DRIVER CLAIMS INJURY; COACHES HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

Tyrone Searight, 49, of Peekskill was arrested and arraigned yesterday before Hon. Rhoda Schoenberger in Ramapo Justice Court on two counts of Workers' Compensation Fraudulent Practices and one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (felonies). He was released on his own recognizance and is due back in court November 26, 2019.

Searight was employed as a bus driver for the MTA Bus Company when he reported a work injury to his left knee on November 7, 2016. After filing paperwork certifying he was unable to work due to the injury, he collected workers' compensation wage indemnity benefits from December 2016 to May 2017.

However, the Inspector General's investigation found that while Searight was claiming he was not working and unable to work, he was actually working as the girls' varsity basketball coach for the Haldane Central School District in Cold Spring. Between November 2016 and March 2017, Searight was observed coaching the team at games and running practices. Video surveillance showed Searight bending, squatting, pacing, waving his arms and abruptly standing up from the sidelines at several games.

Searight was terminated from the MTA Bus Company based upon Searight's work activity while receiving wage replacement benefits.

"While this individual claimed he was injured to the extent that he was unable to work, he was working on the basketball court – an affront against the workers' compensation system," said Inspector General Tagliafierro. "My office will continue to fight waste, fraud and abuse in order to protect the state's taxpayers."

ROCKLAND DELIVERY TRUCK DRIVER COLLECTS \$9,500 WHILE WORKING AT AREA JEWELERS

Mohamed Husamdeen, 56, of Monsey was arrested and arraigned yesterday before Hon. Rhoda Schoenberger in Ramapo Justice Court on Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Workers' Compensation

Fraudulent Practices and Insurance Fraud in the Third Degree (felonies). He was released on his own recognizance and is due back in court November 26, 2019.

On September 10, 2016, Husamdeen was working for Rockland Bakery as a delivery truck driver when he was involved in a car accident and allegedly sustained injuries to his spine, neck, lower back, right wrist and right thumb. Husamdeen filed a claim for workers' compensation benefits, claiming he was not working and unable to work due to the injuries.

However, the Inspector General's investigation found that while Husamdeen was claiming he was not working and unable to work, between May 2017 and September 2018, he worked at several businesses, including two separate jewelry/watch repair kiosks at the Palisades Center mall and a jewelry store in Suffern.

On January 3, 2019, an administrative law judge found Husamdeen in violation of Workers' Compensation Law, in that he wrongfully received \$9,516.49 in wage indemnity benefits to which he was not entitled.

"This individual repeatedly claimed that he was unable to work due to on-the-job injuries to his back, neck and hand – but was allegedly performing intricate repairs to watches and jewelry at the same time," said Inspector General Tagliaferro. "Working while lying to collect workers' compensation benefits is a crime and we will continue to hold those who break the law accountable."

Inspector General Tagliaferro thanked Acting Rockland County District Attorney Kevin Gilleece and his office for their assistance with the prosecutions and the Town of Ramapo Police Department for its assistance with the arrests.

The defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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