



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro

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INSPECTOR GENERAL TAGLIAFIERRO ANNOUNCES GUILTY PLEA OF FORMER MTA BUS DRIVER WHO COLLECTED ALMOST \$17K IN WORKER'S COMPENSATION BENEFITS WHILE COACHING HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

RAMAPO – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro announced the guilty plea of 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 almost \$17,000 in workers' compensation benefits

Tyrone Searight, 49, of Peekskill pled guilty to one count of Disorderly Conduct before Hon. Rhoda Schoenberger in Ramapo Justice Court. He was sentenced to one-year conditional discharge and has paid full restitution of \$16,912.92 to the MTA Bus Company.

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 conducting 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.

"This individual claimed an injury left him unable to work, but was actually coaching on the basketball court," said Inspector General Tagliafierro. "As this case shows, we continue to fight fraud and abuse of the worker's compensation system."

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

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