



Offices of the
Inspector General

LUCY LANG
Inspector General

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December 1, 2022

Gary P. Jenkins
Commissioner
New York City Department of Social Services
Human Resources Administration
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street, 38th Floor
New York, New York 10006

Re: OWIG 2454-318-2019

Dear Commissioner Jenkins:

In August 2019, the New York State Office of the Welfare Inspector General (OWIG) received a referral from the U.S. Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General (SSAOIG) alleging that [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]) had stolen the identity of [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]) and [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]) and may be committing welfare fraud. SSAOIG advised that when [REDACTED] was interviewed, she falsely claimed that her name was [REDACTED] and that she had a social security number under that name, and another under the name of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] further stated that she had known [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] was deceased. We are writing to notify you of the results of the investigation into this matter.

A search on the Welfare Management System (WMS) revealed records for both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] but none for [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] address of record was listed at [REDACTED] Street, Apartment [REDACTED], New York, NY [REDACTED], and her Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) case # [REDACTED] is currently closed for failure to recertify as of June 30, 2019. [REDACTED] also has a Medicaid SSI case #94-[REDACTED] active as of June 1, 1995. [REDACTED] who listed the same address of record, has a SNAP case # [REDACTED] that is active as of June 1, 2017, and a Medicaid case # [REDACTED] that is active as of March 1, 1998. [REDACTED] SNAP and Medicaid cases are both open as of September 14, 2021.

A search on the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) viewer shows that no identification documents were submitted by either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] on their cases. Both individuals have been submitting 24-month New York State Nutrition

Improvement Project (NYSNIP) applications for SSI recipients through the SSA. Notations on [REDACTED] NYSNIP applications/ recertifications state that her roommate is [REDACTED] and that she pays half of the rent and Con Edison bills. The only documents submitted on [REDACTED] case were a Con Edison bill, rent statements, and cancelled rent checks.

A search on the Specialized Fraud Abuse Reporting System (SFARS) shows that on [REDACTED] SNAP case (card ending #0604) was last used on September 2, 2019, at Gristede's store # [REDACTED] located at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] New York, NY [REDACTED]. On [REDACTED] SNAP case (card ending # [REDACTED]) is still being actively used at the same Gristede's store. However, Gristede's informed OWIG investigators that it does not have video surveillance cameras at that location.

In August 2019, the property manager for [REDACTED] Street, Apartment [REDACTED] in Manhattan advised OWIG investigators that the apartment was being leased to [REDACTED]. The property manager further advised that [REDACTED] utilized the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program, which is overseen by the New York City Department of Finance and exempts eligible senior low-income renters from paying some or all rent. According to the property manager, police have responded to the apartment for alleged elder abuse by the caregiver who was residing in the apartment with the tenant. These incidents were reported to the New York City Department for the Aging - Elder Abuse & Crime, although the property manager stated she believed the cases were closed as unsubstantiated. Of note, SSAOIG advised that another resident of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Street reported that the individual residing in Apartment [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] not [REDACTED].

According to the SSAOIG, it previously presented this case to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York (SDNY), which accepted the case. However, following later developments, including the potential elder abuse of [REDACTED] the SDNY declined to prosecute. Given the SDNY's declination, SSAOIG informed OWIG in September 2019 that it would be closing its case as well.

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Vital Records advised that it had no death certificates on file in the five boroughs for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. Unofficial online sources indicate that an individual named [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was born on June 2, 1930, died at age 21 in New York City.

In August 2022, OWIG learned from a review of Medicaid records that an individual identified as [REDACTED] [REDACTED] formerly of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Street, Apartment [REDACTED] in Manhattan, is currently a resident of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Nursing Home in Manhattan. This individual is listed as being 89 years old and suffering from dementia among other ailments.

Given the above, I am referring the findings of this investigation to HRA to investigate the eligibility of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to receive benefits from New York State, given the potential that the benefits are being dispersed under the stolen identities of two individuals, and any other action deemed appropriate.

Please advise me of any action taken by your agency in response to this referral and recommendation within 45 days of the date of this letter. If you require further information, please contact Attorney-in-Charge of Welfare Kristin Abreu at

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lucy Lang
Inspector General

cc: Ann Marie Scalia, Esq.
General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer

Laura Parker
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Bureau of Fraud Investigation