



## **Office of the Inspector General Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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### **Office of the Inspector General's Investigation Leads to Charges Against Boston Firefighter and Newton Business Owner for Defrauding the Newton Housing Authority, October 2014**

On December 31, 2013, a Clerk Magistrate for the Newton District Court issued criminal complaints against Yuri Quinnie (Quinnie), a Boston firefighter, and Milcia De La Cruz (De La Cruz), who owns a hair salon. The complaint charged Quinnie with five counts of conspiracy to commit procurement fraud and two counts of accessory before the fact to commit procurement fraud; it also charged De La Cruz with five counts of conspiracy to commit procurement fraud and three counts of procurement fraud. The Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General was the lead investigatory agency, along with the Newton Police Department. The Middlesex District Attorney's Office led the prosecutions of Quinnie and De La Cruz.

The charges alleged that between 2009 and 2012, De La Cruz was a tenant in a subsidized apartment in the Newton Housing Authority (NHA); Quinnie lived with her but was not an authorized tenant. The charges further alleged that between 2009 and 2012, Quinnie and De La Cruz conspired to submit false information to the NHA in order to conceal the fact that Quinnie was living with De La Cruz and that De La Cruz earned income from Milcia's Salon, which the two defendants co-owned. While he lived in De La Cruz's apartment, Quinnie earned between \$88,000 and \$127,000 a year from the Boston Fire Department. Because De La Cruz did not disclose Quinnie's income or her income from Milcia's Salon, she received a rental subsidy from the NHA, resulting in paying rent as low as \$66 per month. Disclosure of their income would have disqualified Quinnie's and De La Cruz's eligibility for NHA housing.

On October 1, 2014, Quinnie pled to sufficient facts to one count of conspiracy before Judge Dyanne Klein in the Newton District Court. Quinnie must complete 100 hours of community service at the Brockton Veterans Affairs Medical Center, with monthly reports to be filed with the Probation Department. The remaining counts were dismissed.

On October 28, 2014, De La Cruz pled to sufficient facts to one count of procurement fraud before Judge Klein in the Newton District Court. De La Cruz must complete 300 hours of community service and she cannot apply for public housing in Massachusetts until October 2016. Judge Klein placed De La Cruz on pretrial probation for two years on the remaining charges.

The Newton Housing Authority fully cooperated in this investigation.