



LYNNE ABRAHAM
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
1421 ARCH STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102**

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Cathie Abookire / 215-686-8711
Director of Communications

TWO EPA EMPLOYEES ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH WELFARE FRAUD

*Women Collect \$143,379 in Welfare Benefits Through False Pay-Stub
Scheme*

August 27, 2003----District Attorney Lynne M. Abraham today announced the arrest of two EPA employees for collecting \$143,379 in welfare benefits through a false pay-stub scheme. The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, the Environmental Protection Agency Region III and the Pennsylvania Inspector General's Office conducted the investigation.

Linda Golphin aka Linda Burgos, dob 2-1-68, address 60 Babbit Lane, Willingboro, NJ 08046 and Carrie Diggs, dob 10-04-52, address 118 West Walnut Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19120 were arrested August 26,2003 and August 27, 2003 respectively and charged with welfare fraud, medical assistance fraud, forgery, theft by deception and conspiracy, all of which are third-degree felonies. If convicted on all charges, the defendants face a maximum penalty of 17-1/2 to 35 years. Both women were administrative staffers for EPA. Golphin had worked there for 18 years; Diggs was a 20-year employee.

The affidavit of probable cause alleges that between April 28, 1994 and June 30, 2003 Linda Golphin reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare that she was employed part-time at the EPA for limited wages, which is permissible under DPW regulations. However, the DPW told Golphin that they needed documentation of her wages in the form of a pay stub. Since Golphin's actual pay stub reflected full-time wages and listed her as Linda Burgos, she enlisted the help of Carrie Diggs. Diggs, using her computer, produced fake pay stubs that matched the false information that Golphin had given to the DPW. Diggs then sent the fake pay stubs to Golphin via email EPA. Golphin downloaded the fake pay stubs and submitted them to DPW as documentation to support her claims.

The scam unraveled when an alert DPW caseworker went through Golphin's case file and noticed that Golphin had never received a pay raise. The caseworker became

suspicious because she reasoned that even part-time employees receive pay raises. When confronted, Golphin had no response, so the DPW contacted the Pennsylvania Inspector General's Office, which launched an investigation. The EPA then searched the two employees' computers and found the emails with the fake stubs. The agencies then turned over the results of their investigation to the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office for review, which resulted in the arrests.

"Public assistance benefits such as food stamps and medical assistance are reserved exclusively for the needy, not the greedy," said District Attorney Lynne Abraham. "We take these cases very seriously."

Pennsylvania Inspector General Don Patterson said, "The OIG is committed to investigating fraud and misconduct in all executive agencies across the Commonwealth. The commitment of Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham's office to file felony charges in this case evidences a great partnership in our efforts to safeguard citizens' tax dollars."

James W. Newsom, EPA's assistant regional administrator said, "EPA does not permit inappropriate use of federal resources and equipment. Violations are subject to severe sanctions. In this case, the individuals are not being allowed to return to work and have been presented with a proposed notice of removal from federal service, pending appeal. EPA played an integral role in this joint investigation along with the district attorney and both the EPA and Pennsylvania Inspectors General."
