



NEWS

From the Office of the New York State Inspector
General

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DMV CLERK ARRESTED IN FAKE ID SALE

A motor vehicles clerk suspected of selling fake IDs to teenagers faces multiple felony charges after her arrest on related charges Friday.

Latasha Colbert, 24, of Buffalo, is suspected of altering identifications for \$50 each for a 14-year-old runaway and a 19-year-old girl linked to a local escort service, according to investigators who joined the probe with the New York State Inspector General's Office, the state Department of Motor Vehicles, New York State Police and the Erie County Clerk. The teens sought the IDs so they could dance at a strip club or work at a local casino.

Last week, an undercover officer asked Colbert for a change of birth date on her license to say she was 21. Colbert agreed to alter the date from 1989 to 1986 for \$100, plus the \$10 DMV fee.

“Protecting children from such illegal acts is the most important outcome of this investigation,” Inspector General Kristine Hamann said.

Colbert, who was arraigned Saturday in Buffalo City Court, worked part time at the Erie County Auto Bureau on Broadway for about six years. She was fired after her arrest. If convicted, she could serve up to seven years in prison.

Erie County District Attorney Frank J. Clark, who is prosecuting the criminal case, thanked the agencies for “an unprecedented degree of cooperation” and swift action.

Investigators became aware of irregularities in Colbert's transactions three weeks ago after a concerned citizen provided a tip to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Erie County Clerk Kathy Hochul and the DMV immediately placed a hold on the two transactions and launched a review of all of Colbert's prior work. That review is continuing.

Colbert is charged with offering a false instrument for filing, tampering with public records, bribe receiving and criminal possession of a forged instrument. She is being held in lieu of \$1,500 cash bail and is due back in court Feb. 13.

DMV Commissioner David J. Swarts underscored the importance of the investigation, stating: "The criminal conduct of people who prey on unsuspecting citizens will not be tolerated. It is especially egregious when a government employee, who is charged with protecting our citizens and their privacy, is involved."

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