



RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
QUEENS COUNTY**
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568
718-286-6000

Release # 131-2009
www.queensda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2009

CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE
(718) 286-6315

FORMER DRUG COUNSELOR CHARGED WITH FORGERY

Allegedly Filed Documents Falsely Stating That Defendants Had Complied With Drug Treatment

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a drug counselor formerly employed by New Spirit II, a chemical dependency and family services program, has been charged with forgery, tampering with public records and offering a false instrument for filing for allegedly filing false treatment reports for defendants who were supposed to be enrolled in court-ordered drug treatment programs.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant is accused of using his position of trust as a drug counselor to break the law. His alleged actions undermine the entire purpose of the Drug Treatment Court which strives to help defendants end their dependence on drugs. It also serves to erode the public's confidence in alternative treatment programs."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Rodney Mills, 42, of 119-49 189th Street, in St. Albans. The defendant is being held pending arraignment in Queens Criminal Court on charges of second-degree forgery, first-degree tampering with public records and first-degree offering a false instrument for filing. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal charges, Rodney Mills was employed as a drug counselor at New Spirit II, located at 152-04 South Road, in Jamaica, between November 23, 2007 and February 5, 2009. In that role he was authorized and required to report to the Queens Drug Treatment Court the status of criminal defendant clients who participated in the New Spirit II program as part of their court monitored oversight in connection with pending criminal proceedings before the court.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, court records reflect that criminal defendants Raymond Tejada, James Ferguson and Andre Pryor were enrolled in drug treatment programs at New Spirit II. At various times between November 2007 and February 2009, the defendant allegedly filed progress reports with the court reflecting the status of the defendants' treatment. In fact, none of the three defendants was actually enrolled for treatment at New Spirit II. Defendant Mills, after being questioned by detectives, allegedly admitted filing false progress reports with the Drug Treatment Court in exchange for money.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Joseph Brancaccio of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau under the supervision of Sergeant Evelyn Alegre, and the overall supervision of Chief Investigator Lawrence J. Festa and Deputy Chief Investigator Albert D. Velardi.

Douglas L. Knight, Director of the District Attorney's Alternative Sentencing program, assisted in the investigation, as did Supreme Court Justice Marcia Hirsch, of the Drug Treatment Court, Queens County Administrative Judge Fernando M. Camacho, and officials at New Spirit II.

Assistant District Attorney Theresa E. Smith, of the District Attorney's Integrity Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys James M. Liander, Bureau Chief, and Carmencita N. Gutierrez, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that criminal charges are merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

#