

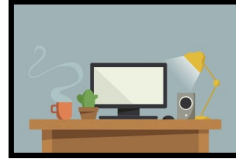


# GOOD GOVERNMENT

Committed to Honesty and Integrity in City Government

*Kasha Graves — Editor-In-Chief*

Late Summer 2024



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## FROM THE DESK OF THE IG



**IG Kamau C. Marable**

This is the handoff edition of the “From the Desk of the IG” articles, as our beloved former Inspector General moves on after completing her six-year term. It is now my honor to serve our citizens in this role. Three years ago, I came up with this idea for the office to publish a newsletter to show the lighter side of this office, which has a very heavy mission. This included, among other signature recurring articles, the “From the Desk of the IG” article. Former IG Ha initially gave a lot of pushback on me asking her to share her softer side and personal reflections, but eventually came to love it. She actually became really good at it and I started looking forward to producing those thought-provoking and quirky articles. Now as Inspector General, I am turning over the reins of the newsletter to the new Editor-In-Chief, Kasha Graves. I know she will do a fantastic job producing the Good Government

Newsletter. It also means that the page has turned to me to now author the “From the Desk Of” articles and I now regret this brainchild of mine and how I will have to pour out my heart in these articles. But, I will dutifully endeavor to do my best to provide interesting and insightful articles, but please don’t expect the poetic prose like Ellen Ha. I look forward to my first attempt in our fall edition.

I know Ellen created a following, so I negotiated for her to provide articles from time to time, when her schedule allows and when inspiration strikes. We will call her article, “Ellen’s Corner”. She has provided her first submission and we know you will enjoy it as well as the entirety of the Good Government Newsletter.



**IGs Kamau C. Marable, Ellen Ha, and James W. Heath**



**OIG Staff at IG Ha’s Fairwell Event**

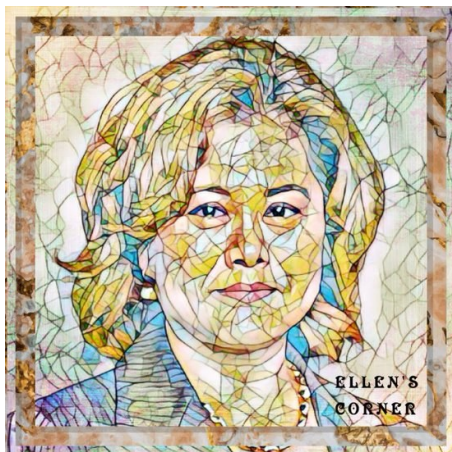


**Detroit City Clerk, Janice M. Winfrey Swearing-In Kamau C. Marable**



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## The Beauty in Diversity and Inclusion

By Ellen Ha

*“One of the most beautiful aspects of Detroit is that it is full of diverse group of people. Over the years, Detroit has come to include me for who I am and as I am. For this, I thank you, Detroit! As I make my exit, I hope all who reads the following can see:”*

See me in you, as I see you in me. We are not that different.

As to the differences between us,

As difficult as it may be,

See me for who I am, as I am.

And, you’ll see the differences that define you and me,

which distinguishes us from one another, are the differences we share.

For you see, if you *can* accept me for who I am, as I am, and I, you,

You *can* see me in you, and I, you in me.

And, if you *can* embrace me for who I am, as I am, and I, you,

You’ll see the distance between us, that seemed to separate us,

Is really a distance we share.



We were never that far apart.

And, when we accept and embrace our differences,

It will not be difficult for you to see me in you, and I, you in me.

And, when we see each other for who we are, as we are,

It will not be difficult for you to respect me for who I am, and I, you, as we are.

And, if the respect we hold for each other can be shared with all,

There’ll come a day when you and I can see them in us and us in them.

And, if we can accept and embrace them for who they are,

and they, us, as we are,

Perhaps the beauty within us can shine for all to share, and

Just perhaps, happily ever after will find its way to us all.



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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### MEET...Kaniya

By Beverly Murray



Kaniya Foster

#### ***Tell me about yourself and your family***

I am a wife and mother of three smart girls. I also became a pet parent for the first time to my dog, princess. My family and I love going on vacation and enjoying as much time together as we can with the busy schedule we all have. I love being around good energy and positive vibes.

#### ***Tell me about your role with the OIG***

I am the OIG's *Executive Administrative Assistant I*. In my position with this department, I make sure our office is presentable for the public as well as assisting with educating city employees, contractors, and residents on waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption. I also enter complaints through email, voicemail, in-person, and anyone that calls in with situations related to what our department does. I make sure that the complaints are entered into the system for our auditors and investigators, as well as our Inspector General to follow up on to make sure every case is completed diligently.

#### ***What is something you enjoy about working for the OIG?***

I like being part of a team that includes me in the discussions pertaining to each case as well as understanding how they handle each case. I do like the workload of finding out if the allegations are true or false, and if the case needs to go any further. I'm very intrigued with how we discuss and go through the cases separately.

#### ***What is your biggest achievement to date, either personal or professional?***

One of my biggest achievements of today would be working for the OIG. I have done several jobs in my life because I have been working since the age of 16. This position holds a title that stands out from any other position with helping the community get the understanding it needs when dealing with waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption within the City of Detroit. So, I think this is one of my biggest achievements as of now, working for the City of Detroit, and holding a position in an office as important as this one.

#### ***What motivates you to start your day?***

Knowing the difference I can make in one's life just by giving positive feedback and being the helping hand someone needs always helps me with the joy of being a great vibe for all that comes in contact with me. I'm motivated by knowing I'm going to make a difference in someone's life every day, rather it's a smile, a conversation, or a listening ear when needed.

#### ***What is the most important thing you have learned in the last five years?***

No one is obligated to anyone, so do your best, you owe it to yourself. Growth is real and so is patience and guidance when your vision becomes blurry.



Kaniya in Chicago

#### ***What do you enjoy doing outside of work?***

Reading books. I read all types of books; it doesn't matter what it is. Anything that catches my eye after reading the back cover, I take it and read it. I like to illustrate my own story no matter who wrote it.

#### ***What is something surprising people may not know about you?***

I get a real joy out of helping others and secretly wish to win the mega million so I can help all my family and friends become the best they want to be. Even though I'm not a big gambler, it doesn't hurt to want to be the giver and not the receiver.

#### ***What is your favorite movie and why?***

I have watched a lot of movies over the years even though my favorite pastime is reading. I can say I like Matilda. The movie reminds me of my oldest child that was very smart like that at that age. I wasn't like those parents lol, but my child at that age was very intelligent and independent like the character on Matilda.

#### ***If you could snap your finger and become an expert at something, what would that be and why?***

I would become an expert at understanding life, because life is hard. There are so many obstacles that we as humans can't figure out. So, I would want better understanding on the principles of life.



Kaniya, Husband, and Children



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## DON'T GET TAKEN...

### Don't Let Your Money Travel to Someone Else's Bank Account

By Jennifer Bentley

Travel fraud is a deceptive or illegal practice related to travel and tourism services. Both businesses and people can be victims of this type of fraud. Here are some common types of travel fraud to be on the lookout for.

#### Airline Tickets Scheme-

Scammers attract customers by significantly undercutting competitors' prices by creating a fictitious website to capture a consumer's personal information, such as credit cards. They then purchase items using your card and you never receive your airline tickets.

#### Free Vacations-

You may get an email, call, or text saying you've won a free vacation for a contest you never entered. However, scammers require you to pay fees and taxes first so your vacation is not actually free. Legitimate companies do not ask you to pay for a free prize.

#### Vacation Home Scams-

It's easy to connect directly with property owners who advertise their vacation homes online but scammers are also trying to get your business. Some scammers take over real rental listings and advertise them as their own, so when you show up for your vacation, you find out that it is already booked by someone else. Then you have no place to stay, and your money is gone. Other scammers will make up listings for places that aren't really for rent or don't exist.



#### International Travel Documents Scam-

Some sites claim to be able to help you get an international travel visa, passport, or other documents. However, these sites are just copycats of the U.S. Department of State website where the scammers will charge you high fees, including fees for services that are free on the U.S. Department of State's website.

Here are some red flags to look out for so your vacation isn't ruined.

- 🚩 Scammers may pressure you to make quick decisions.
- 🚩 You are offered a "free" vacation that you must pay for.
- 🚩 Scammers advertise premium vacation rentals for very cheap prices.
- 🚩 You are told the only way you can pay for your vacation is by wire transfer, gift cards, or cryptocurrency.
- 🚩 You are not given specific details about the travel offer such as the address of the hotel or the name of the cruise line.

Before booking your next vacation, make sure you

- Do some research.
- Don't pay using a wire transfer, gift cards, or cryptocurrency.
- Don't sign or pay until you know all the terms of the deal.

You may report consumer fraud to the Michigan Attorney General's Office at <https://secure.ag.state.mi.us/complaints/consumer.aspx> or by calling 877-765-8388.



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## PANDEMIC FRAUD: TARGETING PPP PILLAGERS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

By Tiye Greene

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has made significant progress in identifying, investigating and punishing fraud in connection with Covid 19 pandemic relief programs. Earlier this year, the Covid 19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force released its 2024 report, which announced that the task force has charged over 3500 defendants and that over \$1.4 billion in fraudulently obtained funds have been either seized or forfeited.

Interestingly, some have recognized an emerging pattern in pandemic fraud-related court filings, in that prosecutors appear to be going after law enforcement agents (LEOs) who (allegedly) fraudulently obtained sums that are much smaller than amounts taken by non-LEO offenders. The prevailing idea, thus far, has been that the Department of Justice would target major fraudsters that obtained loans for hundreds of thousands, or even a million dollars or more. However, some agencies have made it clear that fraudsters in law enforcement will be held accountable even for loans totaling \$40,000 or less.

In 2022, the DOJ Office of Inspector General asked the Michigan Attorney General to investigate a now-former investigator for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. The former LEO is charged with fraudulently obtaining two Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans and one Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) totaling \$34,675 while a federal employee.

Although the amount may be small in comparison to a non-LEO offender who fraudulently obtained about \$4.4 million through a Covid relief fraud scheme, some find it particularly offensive that a LEO would even engage in fraud in the first place. LEOs are, apparently, expected to adhere to a higher standard.

On August 28, 2024, the former ATF agent pled no contest in the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court in Oakland County, and agreed to pay \$34,675 in restitution. Further sentencing has been scheduled for later this fall. Also, for the record, the non-LEO tax preparer that scored over \$4 million in pandemic relief funds and bought himself a Porsche, a Tesla and a new watch has already been sentenced to serve approx. 6 years in prison.



For more stories about pandemic pillagers, including one about 17 employees of a Florida County Sheriff's Office being charged with unlawfully receiving nearly half of \$1 million in pandemic assistance, check out the Oh My Fraud Podcast linked here: [Oh My Fraud I;- Episode 61](#).



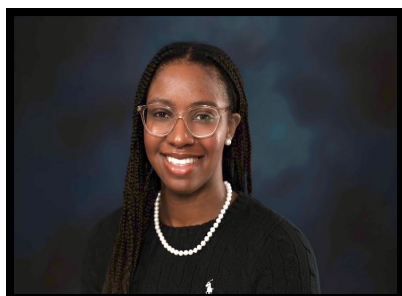


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## 2024 SUMMER MAYORAL FELLOWSHIP REFLECTION

By Christina Hobson



Christina Hobson

This summer, I had the invaluable opportunity to intern with the City of Detroit Office of Inspector General (OIG), an office dedicated to investigating instances of waste, abuse, fraud, and corruption in relation to City resources. My responsibilities included assisting with ongoing investigations and handling complaints from the public, which arrived through various communication channels. The complaints, especially those received over the phone, required me to think on my feet and adapt quickly to the information provided by the complainant. This experience pushed me to apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills in real-time to ensure that each complaint was appropriately assessed and addressed.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this internship was the opportunity to develop my writing and briefing skills. Sorting through materials for investigations and analyzing the facts of each case to determine whether a complaint fell within the OIG's jurisdiction honed my ability to present information clearly and concisely. This experience has been instrumental in preparing me for a future legal career and confirmed my passion for the field.



Overall, my time with the OIG has been the best internship experience I've had to date. It was challenging and fulfilling and created memories I will carry with me as I move forward in my professional journey. I would love to return to the OIG next summer to continue building on the skills I've developed.