



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FUGITIVE NYC TAXI DRIVER EXTRADITED TO FACE CHARGES OF SCHEMING TO DEFRAUD PASSENGERS  
BY PRESSING OUT-OF-TOWN RATE WHILE STILL WITHIN NEW YORK CITY LIMITS**  
***-To date, 45 drivers have pleaded guilty in this large-scale fraud scheme-***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced that DOI investigators, with assistance from the New York / New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force, returned WASIM KHALID CHEEMA to the City today on charges of scheming to defraud more than 2,500 riders of approximately \$11,690. CHEEMA, 23, was detained three weeks ago in Kansas City, Missouri, on a New York County Supreme Court arrest warrant and on a failure to appear warrant for traffic violations in Kansas City, where he was living. This extradition and arrest is part of a widespread fraud investigation that found dozens of cab drivers had overcharged thousands of passengers by pressing the out-of-town rate on their taxicab meters, even though they were within New York City limits. To date, 45 cab drivers have pleaded guilty and the majority have been sentenced, some to 30 days in jail and others to probation and community service. DOI investigated with the office of New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., which is prosecuting these cases, and the City Taxi & Limousine Commission ("TLC").

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Taxi drivers who con New York City passengers are headed for one destination: Arrest, prosecution, and possible jail time. A cab ride should be a classic New York experience, not a quick trip to becoming an unsuspecting victim. Thankfully, the powerful partnership among DOI, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, and the TLC dead-ended this widespread scheme to scam passengers and held these defendants accountable."

CHEEMA will be arraigned in Manhattan Supreme Court.

Last week, DOI picked up another fugitive cab driver, FRANK ESTEVES, 56, in Miami, where he was detained by Miami-Dade Police on a New York County Supreme Court arrest warrant as he was attempting to board a flight to Peru. ESTEVES was charged with defrauding approximately 700 riders of about \$4,000 between 2008 and 2009. He was arraigned in Manhattan Supreme Court on two counts of Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree and released on \$2,500 bail and is expected to return to court on May 13, 2011.

CHEEMA and ESTEVES are no longer licensed by TLC to drive a cab in New York City.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, TLC Commissioner David Yassky, and their staffs, and the New York / New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force, for their assistance in this effort.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of Inspector General for TLC.

Assistant District Attorneys Margaret Gandy, James Meadows, and John R. Spagna, under the direction of Adam Kaufmann, Chief of the Investigative Division at the New York County District Attorney's Office, are assigned to the prosecution of these cases.

An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.