



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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DOI ARRESTS QUEENS RESIDENT IN BRIBERY "STING" ***-- Offered Undercover Tax Assessor \$3,000 To Obtain Phoney Property Deed --***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of PASQUALE DeMICHELE for offering a \$3,000 bribe to an undercover DOI investigator posing as a City Department Finance (DOF) tax assessor. DeMICHELE is charged with offering the payoff to induce the "tax assessor" to provide him with a fraudulent deed for a privately owned house in Middle Village, Queens.

COMMISSIONER GILL HEARN said, "This arrest is part of DOI's ongoing effort to deter municipal corruption and should serve as a fair warning to any citizen who might even be tempted to bribe a City worker. In this case, the DOF employee who initially received the corrupt offer immediately reported it to his supervisor. His actions are to be applauded. They typify the honesty and integrity of the overwhelming majority of decent and hardworking City employees."

DOF COMMISSIONER MARTHA E. STARK said, "This arrest demonstrates that Department of Finance employees will be vigilant in protecting the rights of all New Yorkers, and will not tolerate bribery or fraud of any kind."

According to Commissioner Gill Hearn, the investigation began last month, when the director of DOF's Taxpayer Assistance Unit, a help desk established to answer routine tax-related questions concerning property within the City of New York, advised DOI that a member of his staff had reported that DeMICHELE had offered him a bribe for assistance in obtaining a privately owned 1-family house, located at 61- 46 80th Street in Middle Village, Queens.

A DOI investigator posing as a DOF tax assessor, and wearing a concealed recording device, met with DeMICHELE outside his residence on March 14, 2002. According to the felony complaint that has been filed in the Queens Criminal Court, at that meeting, DeMICHELE offered to pay the undercover investigator \$3,000 in exchange for the undercover's providing DeMICHELE with a false deed to the 80th Street property that would appear on its face to be authentic. As alleged in the complaint, DeMICHELE indicated he wanted to have the phony deed recorded in order to obtain control of the property, valued in the DOF tax rolls at \$261,000. The complaint further charges that last Friday, April 12, DeMICHELE met again with the undercover investigator near Juniper Valley Park, in Queens, showed the investigator money to be paid for the falsified deed, and obtained the false document from him. DeMICHELE was then arrested by DOI

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investigators.

DeMICHELE, of 61-55 76th Street in Middle Village, has been charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Third Degree, Giving Unlawful Gratuities, and Resisting Arrest. If convicted, DeMICHELE faces up to 7 years in prison.

Commissioner Gill Hearn expressed her sincere appreciation to DOF Commissioner Stark, and members of her staff, for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and DOF Inspector General Vincent E. Green and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Maureen Thomas, First Assistant Inspector General Jeffrey Dolcimascolo, Investigative Auditor Lloyd Ledlum, and Confidential Investigator Charlie Mercieca.

The Office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Daniel O'Leary, under the supervision of James Liander, Chief of the DA's Integrity Bureau, is assigned to the matter.

Members of the public are reminded that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.