



## Department of Investigation

### *Press Release*

**Release #042-2000**

***Bronx Livery Service Owner Arrested In Taxi Teacher "Sting"***  
***-- Sold "Defensive Driving" Certificates To Hack Applicants Without Any Training -***

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2000** -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of CARLOS ALVAREZ, the President of Excellent Car Service in the Bronx and a driving instructor employed by Empire Safety Council, Inc., of Smithtown, Long Island, a provider of accident prevention courses, for illegally selling defensive driving certificates to DOI undercover agents, posing as hack license applicants, without providing the mandatory training evidenced by the certificates.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) regulations require that livery drivers attend and complete a New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)-certified accident prevention course which consists of 6 hours of lectures, videotapes, and discussions presented by a State-approved driving instructor.

DOI initiated an investigation last summer, after TLC referred an allegation that a Manhattan car service employee was selling defensive driving certificates without providing the required training. The investigation subsequently led to Excellent Car Service, a livery car service at 144 East 174th Street in the Bronx, where, on October 19, 1999, and January 27, 2000, ALVAREZ allegedly sold defensive driving certificates for \$50 each -- to 2 different DOI undercover officers posing as taxi drivers -- without providing the State-mandated training.

According to the criminal complaint, ALVAREZ, would, as part of the scheme, submit the applicant's driver information to State DMV, via Empire Safety Council, Inc., falsely stating that the applicant had successfully completed the State-required course.

DOI Commissioner Kuriansky said, "This arrest should serve as a stern warning to the taxi industry that cheating is simply not worth the risk. Together with TLC, we are constantly monitoring the City's livery operations and using undercover 'stings' to catch the corrupt. Any hack license applicants who buy defensive driving certificates without taking the necessary training are recklessly putting their own lives and careers and those of their passengers in jeopardy."

TLC Chairperson Diane McGrath-McKechnie said, "Once these allegations came to our attention, we immediately referred them to DOI and are extremely pleased with its rapid response as well as by the positive resolution of the investigation."

ALVAREZ, 47, of 21 Cox Avenue in Yonkers, has been charged with Offering a False Instrument

for Filing in the First Degree, a Class E felony, and Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree, a Class A misdemeanor. If convicted, ALVAREZ faces up to 4 years in prison.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to TLC Chairperson McGrath-McKechnie and her staff for their assistance in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by John McMahon, DOI's Acting Inspector General for TLC, Special Investigators Tim Crowe and Frank Smith, and DOI Investigative Squad Detectives Angel LaPorte and Ismael Ruiz.

The Office of the Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Taa Grays is handling the case under the direction of Assistant District Attorney Thomas L. Leahy, Chief, Rackets Bureau.