



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #032-99

DOI ARRESTS QUEENS PROPERTY OWNER FOR GIVING DOT INSPECTOR UNLAWFUL GRATUITY - "\$100 FOR COFFEE"

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1999 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of SHUI CHUN WONG, a property owner in Corona, Queens, for giving \$100 in cash to a New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) inspector for "coffee."

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "Citizens should be aware that giving a City worker a gratuity for doing his job is wrong under any circumstances. It doesn't matter whether it is \$5 or \$100 or \$1,000, whether the money is given under the guise of being a 'tip' or just for 'coffee'; such conduct is illegal and will result in arrest and prosecution. In this case, the DOT inspector is to be applauded for immediately reporting the matter to his supervisor. The integrity of this inspector is reflective of the overwhelming majority of good, honest, and decent City employees."

The investigation began last December when a DOT highway and sewer inspector, conducting a re-inspection of a defective sidewalk in front of 49-02 108th Street, was approached by WONG, who identified herself as the owner of the property. WONG offered the inspector an undetermined amount of money, which he refused. When the inspector returned to his City vehicle to write the sidewalk inspection report, WONG threw a \$100 bill into the car and told the inspector that the money was for "coffee." The inspector left the bill where it fell on the car floor and immediately reported the matter to his supervisor who, in turn, contacted DOI. Later that day, a DOI investigator, posing as the inspector's supervisor, met with WONG, who confirmed that she gave the money to the inspector.

WONG, 55, of 49-02 108th Street in Corona, New York, was charged with Giving Unlawful Gratuities, a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail.

The investigation was conducted by Ronald P. Calvosa, DOI's Inspector General for DOT, and members of his staff, including First Deputy Inspector General Mary T. Piechocki, Assistant Inspector General Chuck Joe, and Confidential Investigator Omar Sarach.

The Office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case.