



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

Release 21-2006
www.nyc.gov/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2006

CONTACT: EMILY GEST/ERIN BYRNE
(212) 825-5931

DOI ARRESTS MAN FOR PAYING BRIBE TO UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATOR

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today that GREGORY ZAPANTIS was arrested Thursday for allegedly paying a \$50 bribe to a DOI undercover investigator posing as a New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) inspector in order to avoid receiving health code violations and possible closure of his food service establishment.

ZAPANTIS, 46, of Cliffside Park, N.J., was charged with Bribery in the Third Degree. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

As part of an ongoing effort by DOI to arrest restaurant owners who try to circumvent the City's health code by bribing or attempting to bribe DOHMH inspectors to ignore code violations, DOI sent an undercover investigator posing as a DOHMH inspector to meet with ZAPANTIS, owner of Angelo's Shack in Manhattan, for a routine inspection. ZAPANTIS allegedly paid the undercover \$50 so he would not receive violations and to prevent the possible closure of his establishment. After DOI's undercover met with ZAPANTIS, DOHMH inspectors issued the appropriate violations and shut down the establishment. DOHMH will seek to revoke the permit for the operation of ZAPANTIS's business.

"This case should serve as a reminder to all food service establishment operators that there are consequences to be paid by those who engage in corrupt conduct and attempt to shirk their responsibility to operate in a safe and sanitary manner," said Commissioner Gill Hearn.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene Commissioner Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., and members of his staff, for bringing this matter to DOI's attention and for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Acting Inspector General for DOHMH Christopher Staackmann and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Stephan Zander and Special Investigators Byron Biggerstaff and John Eleftheriades.

The office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Bernice Ordonez is handling the matter.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

Get the worms out of the Big Apple. To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI directly at (212)825-5959.