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**DOI INVESTIGATION LEADS TO ARRESTS OF 12 LICENSED TAXICAB DRIVERS  
FOR CREDIT CARD SCAM RESULTING IN THE THEFT OF NEARLY \$40,000**

***--DOI made a 13<sup>th</sup> arrest: The brother of a licensed taxicab driver charged with posing as his sibling--***

Mark G. Peters, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrests of 12 taxicab drivers licensed by the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission ("TLC") for their roles in an alleged credit card scam that resulted in the theft of approximately \$39,550 from credit card holders and TLC vendor Verifone, Inc. ("Verifone"). The vendors responsible for electronic payments in taxis are Creative Mobile Technologies, LLC ("CMT"), Flywheel, and Verifone. DOI became aware of the alleged fraud when CMT and Verifone notified DOI of what they believed to be suspicious and fictitious trips. The trips were characterized as being high in cost, but of short distances and duration. DOI investigators reviewed records from TLC and the electronic payment vendors to identify trips with these characteristics and interviewed the credit card holders who allegedly made the trips, finding that almost all of the card holders were not in New York City at the time of the transactions or had not used a taxicab on the days the trips had taken place. DOI also arrested a brother of one of the defendants on charges of posing as his sibling, a licensed TLC driver. The office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting these cases.

DOI Commissioner Mark G. Peters said, "These taxi drivers turned their cabs into a crime scene. They exploited their taxi's electronic payment systems to run up thousands of dollars in fake charges for fake rides, according to the charges. Fortunately, the City vendors in charge of these electronic systems reported suspicious activity to DOI, which launched an investigation that uncovered and stopped this illegally charged conduct. I want to thank Queens District Attorney Richard Brown and his office for their work and partnership on this matter."

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown said, "As cab drivers, the defendants are accused of taking their passengers for a financial ride by hijacking their credit cards to make fraudulent, high dollar transactions. Consumers should always examine their monthly credit card statements for fraudulent billing and report any unusual activity to authorities. I thank DOI, the TLC and its vendors for their work in this investigation and in helping to bring these defendants to justice."

According to the criminal complaints and DOI's investigation, the alleged fraud took place between January and July 2015. At the time, CMT and Verifone provided all of the electronic services offered in yellow and green cabs in New York City, including televisions and the electronic payment systems. Typically, the vendors use the data collected to determine payments for drivers, and to immediately pay them, while waiting for the passengers' credit card companies to process the transactions. As CMT and Verifone reviewed this data to make payments, they noticed suspicious trips by certain cabs and alerted DOI to the potential fraud. DOI determined 12 TLC licensed drivers allegedly were using credit cards to make multiple transactions for high dollar amounts without the authorization of the card holders or their presence in the cabs, most of the "trips" lasting less than a minute, some with no distances at all, with charges ranging from \$100 to \$499 per trip. In each of these instances, DOI investigators spoke to the card holders in question and found that they were either

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not present in New York City at the time of the transactions, did not take taxicabs on those dates and times, and had their credit cards in their possession.

According to the criminal complaints, the following individuals were charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree; Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, both class D felonies; and Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, all class E felonies. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison. According to the charges and DOI's investigation:

- JANZEB ALTAF, 22, of Queens, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$3,022 over 19 fraudulent transactions between February 2015 and April 2015. ALTAF processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .82 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$250 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- JEAN MASSANGO, 43, of Tarrytown, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$6,148 over 14 fraudulent transactions between January 2015 and March 2015. MASSANGO processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .26 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$491 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- LIDIAL SECK, 51, of New York, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$7,916 over 25 fraudulent transactions between February 2015 and April 2015. SECK processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .34 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$499 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.

According to the criminal complaints, the following individuals were charged with two counts of Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, two counts of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fourth Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, all class E felonies. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison:

- MOULEVAIS BALTHAZARD, JR., 28, of Brooklyn, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$1,075 over seven fraudulent transactions between February 2015 and April 2015. BALTHAZARD processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .16 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$221 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- ABOUBACAR JALLOH, 51, of Brooklyn, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$1,656 over four fraudulent transactions between January 2015 and March 2015. JALLOH processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .04 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$497 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- MARIE LOUISSAINT, 42, of Brooklyn, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$1,186 over six fraudulent transactions during the month of May 2015. LOUISSAINT processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .07 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$219 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- MAHER MANSOUR, 56, of Queens, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$2,825 over 15 fraudulent transactions between March 2015 and May 2015. MANSOUR processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .07 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$255 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- ALHADI RAGAB-HILAL, 51, of New York, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$2,502 over ten fraudulent transactions between May 2015 and June 2015. RAGAB-HILAL processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .05 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$390 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.

- MOUHAMODOU SECK, 59, of the Bronx, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$1,111 over four fraudulent transaction during the month of April 2015. SECK processed credit card transactions with trip distances of zero miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$400 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- MANJINDER SINGH, 25, of Queens, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$1,100 over three fraudulent transaction in March 2015. SINGH processed credit card transactions with trip distances of zero miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$400 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- YAHAYA DIABY, 35, of New York, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$3,150 over 15 fraudulent transactions between February 2015 and April 2015. DIABY processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .16 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$350 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.
- IBRAHIM FOFANA, 40, of the Bronx, N.Y., is charged with stealing \$3,145 over 17 fraudulent transactions between April 2015 and July 2015. FOFANA processed credit card transactions with trip distances ranging from zero to .16 miles for fraudulent charges of up to \$300 per trip, when the card holders were not present in New York City or not taking taxicabs.

DOI also arrested MAMEFALL SECK, 58, of the Bronx, who was charged with Criminal Impersonation in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor.. Upon conviction, a class A misdemeanor is punishable by up to a year's incarceration. According to DOI's investigation, SECK was found late Wednesday, December 14, 2016, driving a cab assigned to his brother, MOUHAMODOU SECK.

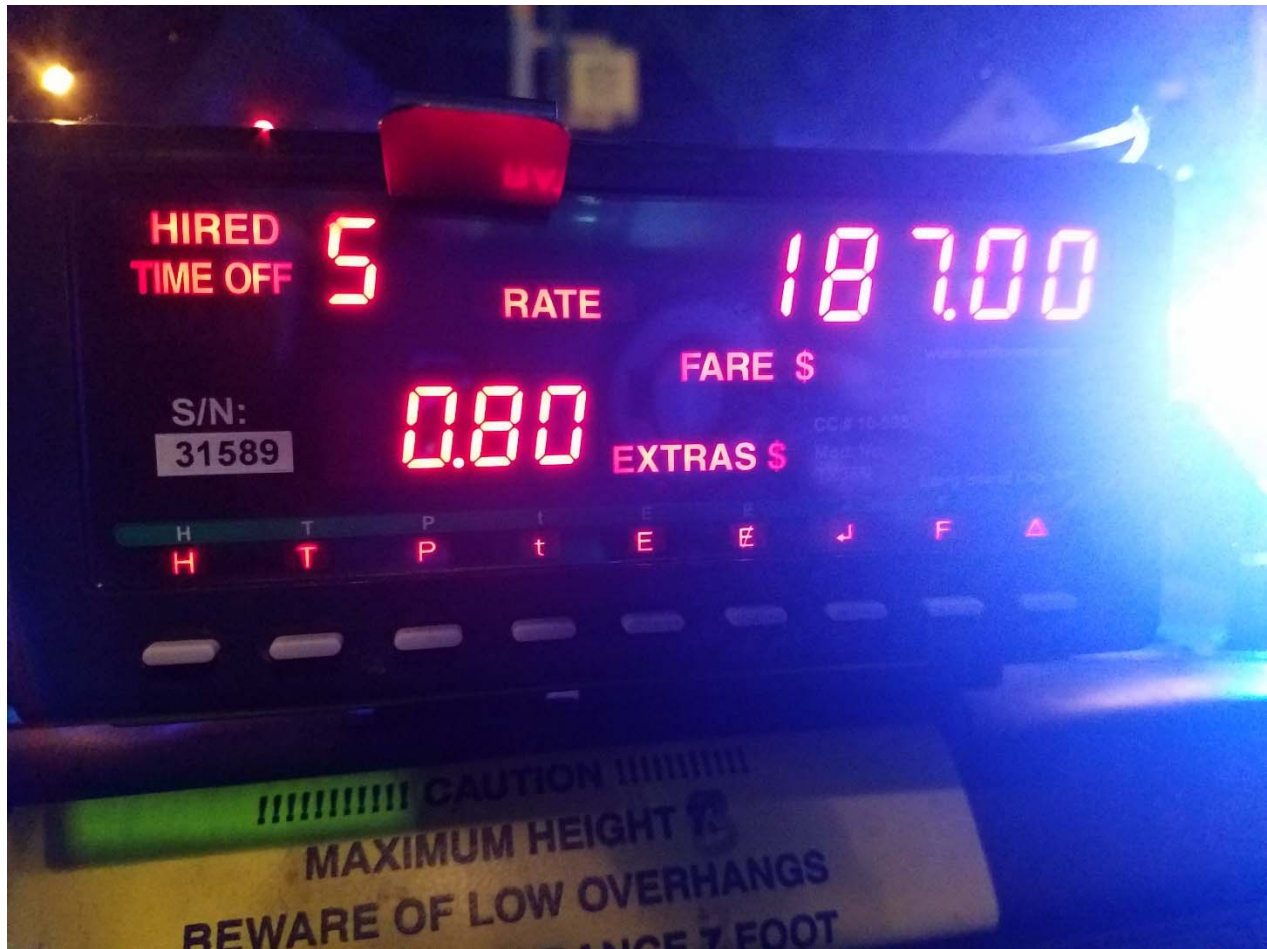
Each defendant's TLC license was suspended upon their arrest. If convicted, TLC will revoke their license.

DOI Commissioner Peters thanked Queens County District Attorney Richard A Brown and TLC Commissioner Meera Joshi, and their staffs, and the staffs of CMT and Verifone, for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for TLC, specifically Deputy Inspector General Byron Biggerstaff, Special Investigator/Data Analyst Nicholas Devine, Senior Data Analyst Calvin Lam, and Special Investigator Michael Liaw, under the supervision of Inspector General Shannon Manigault, Assistant Commissioner Michael Healy, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Michael Carroll, and First Deputy Commissioner Lesley Brovner.

The case is being prosecuted by the Queens County District Attorney's Office, specifically Assistant District Attorney Charissa Ilardi, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Gregory Pavlides, Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau.

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



Pictured above: A taxicab meter that shows a “Rate 5” fare, which is a negotiated fare outside the five boroughs. The majority of the defendants allegedly turned their taxicab meters to Rate 5, then put the stolen credit card information through the electronic payment system, and paid for a fictitious trip, in some cases ones that lasted mere seconds and went minimal distances.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City’s corruption watchdog. 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. DOI’s strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.*

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