



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS TWO CONTRACTORS ON CHARGES OF OFFERING A BRIBE TO A CITY BUILDINGS INSPECTOR  
--Investigation prompted by tip from City Buildings Inspector--**

Margaret Garnett, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrest of two contractors at a mixed-use residential/commercial construction site in Queens for allegedly offering a bribe to an Inspector from the City Department of Buildings ("DOB"). The bribe offer was an unsuccessful effort to evade violations for the failure to obtain the requisite construction permits from DOB and the failure to follow safety protocols that protect tenants during construction renovations, according to the investigation. A DOB inspector reported to DOI that he had been offered a bribe, initiating DOI's investigation. As a result, DOI investigators were able to work with the Inspector, place him under surveillance, and catch the defendants in the act of allegedly offering money to circumvent receiving any buildings violations, according to the criminal complaint. The Office of Queens County Acting District Attorney John M. Ryan is prosecuting the case.

ISMAIL MOHAMMAD HASSAN, 22, of Brooklyn, N.Y., and MOHAMED ALI HASSAN, 50, of Brooklyn, N.Y., were each charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, a class D felony, Monday afternoon, September 30, 2019. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison. The defendants were arraigned the evening of September 30, 2019, released on their own recognizance, and their next court date was scheduled for October 28, 2019 in Queens Criminal Court.

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, "This investigation shows how quickly corruption can be stopped when City employees embrace their mandate to report wrongdoing to DOI. Working together, DOI and this Buildings Inspector made this City safer, as work has now been stopped on the site until the buildings violations have been addressed. I commend this DOB Inspector who stood up for integrity and for all New Yorkers. And I thank the Queens District Attorney's Office for their partnership in prosecuting this matter."

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, this matter began with a tip the morning of September 30, 2019, from a DOB Inspector who informed DOI that he had just been offered \$400 in exchange for not issuing various DOB violations at 55-43 Myrtle Ave. in Queens. As a result of that report, DOI worked with the Inspector, and had him under surveillance, when he returned to the site to speak with the defendants about the building violations. At that time, MOHAMED ALI HASSAN removed a sum of money from his pocket, handed it to ISMAIL MOHAMMAD HASSAN, who then placed that sum of money, \$290 in cash, in the DOB Inspector's hand. The DOB Inspector asked where the extra \$100 was that had been previously discussed and MOHAMED ALI HASSAN said if the Inspector came back later the defendants would provide the rest.

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Commissioner Garnett thanked DOB Commissioner Melanie E. La Rocca and her staff, in particular the DOB Inspector who reported the crime and DOB's Office of the Building Marshal Division Head Salvatore Agostino for their prompt action and cooperation during this investigation. Commissioner Garnett also thanked Acting Queens District Attorney John M. Ryan and his staff, in particular Assistant District Attorney James M. Liander, Chief of the Queens District Attorney's Office Integrity Bureau, for their prosecution of this matter.

This investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Buildings, specifically Special Investigator Ross Hoffman, under the supervision of Inspector General Gregory Cho, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigation Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*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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