



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

MARGARET GARNETT  
COMMISSIONER

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

Release #09-2020  
nyc.gov/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2020**

**CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI  
NICOLE TURSO  
(212) 825-5931**

**GUILTY PLEA IN EXTENSIVE INSURANCE FRAUD SCHEME THAT LED TO  
THE UNDERINSURANCE OF MORE THAN 100 CONSTRUCTION WORKERS**

Margaret Garnett, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), issued a statement on today’s guilty plea by an insurance broker to Insurance Fraud in the Second Degree, a class C felony, and Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, a class E felony, and to a violation of the workers compensation law regarding false statements in procuring workers’ compensation insurance. STEVEN ASVAZADOURIAN, 41, was charged as part of an indictment in September 2019, alleging he was part of an extensive insurance fraud scheme that included false information provided to insurance carriers about work being performed by employees in order to avoid more than \$1 million in insurance premiums, an action that left more than 100 construction workers underinsured.

ASVAZADOURIAN, of Yonkers, NY, pleaded guilty today before Justice Maxwell Wiley in New York County Supreme Court. The plea requires the defendant to pay \$100,000 to the New York State Insurance Fund and carries a sentence of three years’ probation, 800 hours of community service and the permanent surrender of ASVAZADOURIAN’s insurance broker license. A trial involving ASVAZADOURIAN’s co-defendant, labor broker SALVADOR ALMONTE, JR., 39, of Englewood, NJ, has not yet been set.

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, “This guilty plea underscores that purposefully providing false information to evade construction insurance payments, thereby risking the coverage of scores of construction workers, is a serious crime. Insurance brokers who choose to cheat the system will face consequences and be held to account. DOI was pleased to investigate this matter in partnership with the Manhattan District Attorney and the New York State Inspector General.”

Commissioner Garnett thanked Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliaferro, and their staffs; as well as the New York State Department of Financial Services’ Criminal Investigations Unit and Insurance Licensing Unit, and the New York State Insurance Fund, for their cooperation and assistance in this matter.

The office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr., prosecuted the case, specifically Assistant District Attorneys Leah Keith and Kenneth Moore, under the supervision of Rackets Bureau Assistant District Attorneys Judy Salwen, Principal Deputy Chief; Michael Ohm, Deputy Bureau Chief; and Jodie Kane, Bureau Chief; and Executive Assistant District Attorney Christopher Conroy, Chief of the Investigation Division.

The following individuals from DOI investigated the matter: Chief Investigator James McElligott and Assistant Inspector General Dan Taylor, under the supervision of Inspector General Gregory Cho, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort.

An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is 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.*

**DOI's press releases can also be found at [twitter.com/NYC\\_DOI](https://twitter.com/NYC_DOI)  
Bribery and Corruption are a Trap. Don't Get Caught Up. Report It at 212-3-NYC-DOI.**