



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOHMH INSPECTOR REPORTS TO DOI GRATUITY BY MANHATTAN DELI OWNER
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION RESULTS IN GUILTY PLEA BY DELI OWNER TODAY**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced the arrest and guilty plea today of a Manhattan deli owner on a charge of giving an unlawful gratuity by providing \$400 in cash to a City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”) inspector and suggesting the inspector fail to appear at a court appearance concerning the 67 violations identified at the restaurant. The investigation was prompted by the DOHMH inspector who reported to DOI that she found cash in her bag following her inspection of the deli. The case is being prosecuted by the Office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr.

HASSAN ALBORATI, 61, of Brooklyn N.Y., was charged with and pled guilty to Giving Unlawful Gratuities, a class A misdemeanor. According to the terms of the plea agreement, ALBORATI will forfeit \$400 to the City and has been sentenced to a Conditional Discharge. Separately, DOHMH is expected to begin proceedings to revoke his restaurant license.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “Giving cash to a City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene inspector with an intention to thereby evade the full impact of health violations is against the law. I thank the DOHMH inspector who immediately reported this attempt to improperly influence her with a cash payment and the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office for their commitment to maintain the integrity of City inspections.”

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr. said, “The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s sanitary inspections ensure New Yorkers are safe at restaurants throughout New York City. Hassan Alborati gave an unlawful gratuity by providing \$400 in cash to a DOHMH inspector in an attempt to evade the enforcement of 67 violations his restaurant was facing. We will continue to root out fraud in Manhattan alongside our partners at DOI.”

DOHMH Commissioner, Dr. Ashwin Vasani said, “By ensuring that food is prepared in sanitary environments, inspectors play a critical role in keeping New Yorkers healthy. To be effective, they must be fair and honest. We applaud the integrity of this inspector who reported illegal behavior to the City Department of Investigation and upheld the standards that are expected of food service in New York City.”

According to the criminal complaint, on Friday, May 19, 2023, a DOHMH inspector conducted an inspection at Gardenia Deli on 8th Avenue in Manhattan. ALBORATI, the owner of the Deli, was present. The DOHMH inspector found 67 violations and instructed ALBORATI to obtain the services of an exterminator and to seal holes identified as potential access points for vermin. The DOHMH inspector also told ALBORATI that due to the number of violations, his deli would be re-inspected within seven days. At the conclusion of the inspection, the DOHMH inspector asked ALBORATI if she could use the restroom.

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She left her work bag on top of a freezer chest while she did so, and later that day, she found a white unmarked envelope with \$400 inside her work bag. The inspector called ALBORATI that day and he confirmed that he placed the \$400 in the bag. On June 14, 2023, during a recorded call, the DOHMH inspector spoke to ALBORATI who again confirmed that he had provided the \$400 to the DOHMH inspector. When asked what ALBORATI wanted in exchange for the cash, ALBORATI responded that not showing up in court would be good for the deli because the judge could reduce the impact of the violations. With the 67 violations, ALBORATI faced a potential C grade if the violations were not corrected upon reinspection.

DOI Commissioner Strauber thanked Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr., and his staff for the prosecution of this matter, which is being handled by Assistant District Attorney Jaime Hickey-Mendoza. Commissioner Strauber also thanked DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan and his staff for their assistance and cooperation.

The investigation was conducted by Special Investigator Daniel Mares of DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOHMH and was supervised by Assistant Inspector General Shakina Griffith, Deputy Inspector General Mary Kozlow, Inspector General Thomas Kapp, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

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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