



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**DOI ARRESTS THREE RESTAURANT OWNERS THIS WEEK ON BRIBERY CHARGES**

***--Arrests are result of bribe offers reported to DOI by City Health inspectors--***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of three restaurant owners – one in the Bronx and two in Queens – on charges of offering cash to undercover DOI investigators posing as City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") inspectors to overlook health violations. DOI acted on information from DOHMH inspectors who reported they were offered money to ignore violations and refused the offers. The offices of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson and Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown are prosecuting the cases.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Bribery is no way to pass a restaurant inspection. In fact, trying to evade the City Health Code will only lead to a smorgasbord of problems. City health inspectors report bribe offers to DOI, and their information leads to investigations, arrests and prosecutions."

The following individuals were arrested this week:

- THEMISTOKLIS KATEHIS, 55, of the Bronx, and owner of Allerton Restaurant, 772 Allerton Avenue in the Bronx, was arrested Wednesday, June 1, 2011, and charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, a class D felony, Criminal Solicitation in the Fourth Degree, a class A misdemeanor, and Criminal Solicitation in the Fifth Degree, a violation. The defendant was arraigned, released on his own recognizance, and is expected to return to court July 19, 2011.

According to the criminal complaint, in March 2011, a DOI undercover investigator posing as a DOHMH inspector went into the Allerton Restaurant, observed health code violations, and informed the defendant of the violations. The defendant asked whether some of the violations could be removed. When the defendant was told the violations had to be issued, the defendant first offered the investigator dinner and later gave the investigator a total of \$170 in cash to overlook the violations.

- VASKO TODOROSKI, 50, of Glendale, N.Y., and owner of International Bake Shop at 719 Seneca Avenue in Queen, was arrested late Thursday, June 2, 2011, and charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and Rewarding Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a class E felony.

According to the criminal complaint, in May 2011, a DOI undercover investigator posing as a DOHMH inspector went into the International Bake Shop and observed a number of health code violations, including insects inside the bakery and food preparation area, uncovered and exposed food, and mouse droppings underneath the sink next to the food preparation area. The violations would have resulted in fines totaling more than \$1,500 and may have also resulted in the immediate closure of the bakery. The investigator informed the defendant about the health code violations and the defendant asked if he could offer the investigator something in exchange for ignoring the violations and receiving a "B" grade and subsequently gave \$300 to the investigator in exchange for not reporting the violations. Prior to this inspection, the bakery was given a C grade by DOHMH, the minimum passing grade for a City food establishment.

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- ISIDRO POLANCO, 44, of East Elmhurst, N.Y., and owner of Polanco's Restaurant at 33-13 108th Street in Queens, was arrested late Thursday, June 2, 2011, and charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, a class D felony, Rewarding Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a class E felony, and Attempted Rewarding Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor.

According to the criminal complaint, in May 2011, a DOI undercover investigator posing as a DOHMH inspector went into Polanco's Restaurant and observed a number of health code violations, including uncovered food in the kitchen, employees handling food without wearing gloves, and food particles on the kitchen floor. When the defendant was told about the violations, he escorted the investigator to a private area in the restaurant and gave the investigator \$300 in exchange for not reporting the violations. The defendant asked the investigator to check the computer, find out the next inspection date at the restaurant, and said he would take care of the investigator.

A class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison, a class E felony by up to four years in prison, a class A misdemeanor by up to a year's incarceration, and a violation by up to 15 days.

The Office of Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the KATEHIS case, and the Office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the TODOROSKI and POLANCO cases.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley, Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown and their staffs for their assistance in these investigations.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOHMH.

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.*

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