



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #1-99

FIREFIGHTER SOLICITS PAYOFF FROM POLICE OFFICER SEEKING TO JOIN FDNY

MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 1999 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of BRIAN J. BITTROLFF, a New York City firefighter assigned to the Fire Department's Personnel Unit, for requesting a bribe from a New York City police officer who was applying to join the Fire Department (FDNY).

As a Candidate Background Investigator in the FDNY Personnel Unit, BITTROLFF was responsible for investigating individuals applying to become New York City firefighters. In December 1998, BITTROLFF contacted a FDNY candidate whose application he had been assigned and informed the applicant that he might have trouble being approved as a firefighter because of some prior disciplinary sanctions (known as "Command Disciplines" that had been issued against him in his current position as a New York City police officer -- and which the applicant had previously disclosed on his Fire Department application. During their ensuing conversation, BITTROLFF told the applicant that he could take care of the matter in return for a "token of appreciation," such as a \$25 gift certificate from Costco, the discount retailer.

After BITTROLFF requested a meeting the following day at his office at FDNY Headquarters in Brooklyn, the police officer reported the corrupt solicitation to his superiors who, in turn, notified the Fire Department. The Fire Department then referred the matter to DOI.

The next day, the police officer, wearing a concealed tape recorder, met with BITTROLFF, who instructed the candidate to revise his application by omitting any mention of the "Command Disciplines." At the end of their meeting BITTROLFF again asked for, and received, a \$25 Costco gift certificate from the applicant.

BITTROLFF, 45, of Ozone Park, Queens, has been charged with Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, Tampering with Public Records in the First Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, and Official Misconduct. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

BITTROLFF has been a firefighter since 1984, and is presently on light duty due to a 10-year-old back injury. He has been suspended without pay.

The investigation was conducted by Elyse N. Post, DOI's Deputy Inspector General for the Fire Department, and members of the Inspector General's staff, including Chief Investigator Frank X. Smith and Special Investigator Timothy Crowe.

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The Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Eileen K. Ayvazian, Counsel, of the District Attorney's Rackets Division, is handling the matter.