



Department of Investigation

Press Releases

Two Brooklyn Plumbing Firm Employees Arrested In DOI Bribery "Sting" At Queens Housing Complex

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2000 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), and Queens District Attorney RICHARD A. BROWN, today announced the felony arrests of JOSEPH LICATA, a project manager for Brooklyn-based Pace Plumbing Corporation (Pace), and DMITRIY GORELIK, a Pace employee, for making a total of \$2,250 in cash payoffs to a DOI undercover agent. The payoffs were allegedly made to avoid the issuance of two Notices of Violation (NOVs) and eight Inspector Warning Notices (IWNs) for improperly installed water meters, under the City's Reimbursable Water Metering Program, at a housing complex in Long Island City.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, the City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers the Reimbursable Water Metering Program, under which all residential and commercial buildings are to have water meters installed to record water usage, and to ensure that City water charges are based on usage rather than frontage. Commissioner Kuriansky noted that, prior to the Program, water usage costs were based on property dimensions, rather than actual usage. The Program enables homeowners to hire a licensed master plumber of their own choosing to install their meters. DEP refunds them the cost of these installations, following an inspection by agency water use inspectors. If property owners do not use their own plumbers, DEP will make arrangements to have meters installed through its own contractor.

In September 1998, DEP inspectors visited the Elizabeth and Gregory Housing Complex, located at 20-65 26th Street and 20-65 27th Street in Long Island City, to inspect water meters installed by Pace. In the course of the inspection, GORELIK allegedly offered the inspectors an unspecified amount of money to overlook certain defects in the way some of the meters had been installed. Because of these defects, the meters were not able to record actual water usage. The inspectors reported this conversation to their supervisor who, in turn, notified DOI.

Shortly thereafter, an undercover DOI investigator, posing as a DEP Supervising Water Use Inspector, met with LICATA, GORELIK's supervisor. During this meeting, LICATA paid the undercover \$250 cash in exchange for not issuing two NOVs to Pace. Commissioner Kuriansky noted that earlier, in May 1998, Pace had been issued

two IWNs for improperly installed meters at the same housing complex, which, as of the September 1998 inspection, had not yet been corrected. DEP requires that if IWNs are not corrected within 45 days, a NOV summons is then issued.

In October 1998, the DOI undercover and a DEP inspector met with LICATA to inspect more Pace-installed

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meters at the complex. When they pointed out to LICATA other meters that had been improperly installed, he told them that GORELIK was supervising the job.

Three days later, the DOI undercover met with both GORELIK and LICATA. During this meeting, GORELIK, in LICATA's presence, paid the DOI undercover \$2,000 cash to avoid being issued IWNs for eight improperly installed meters at the housing complex.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "DOI is committed to rooting out municipal corruption, and these arrests should serve as a stern warning to any citizen who might even be tempted to bribe a City worker. The DEP inspectors are to be commended for promptly reporting this corrupt offer to their supervisor. Their integrity is reflective of the overwhelming majority of good, honest, and decent City employees."

LICATA, 41, of 98 Bowman Road, Jackson, New Jersey, and GORELIK, 31, of 2501 East 23rd Street, Brooklyn, New York, have each been charged with Bribery in the Third Degree. If convicted, they face up to 7 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Clive I. Morrisk, DOI's Inspector General for DEP, and members of his staff, including Special Investigators Marc Herman and James Christo.

The Office of Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Robert S. Ciesla is handling the matter.

Members of the public are reminded that a complaint is merely an accusation and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.