



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

Release #020-99

### **QUEENS HOMEOWNER AND CONTRACTOR CHARGED WITH BRIBERY IN DOI UNDERCOVER STING**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 1999 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrests, in separate undercover investigations, of DOMENICO ANTONELLI, a general contractor in Flushing, Queens, and MARY PAPANTONIOU, a Queens homeowner, for attempting to bribe City Department of Transportation (DOT) inspectors.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "These arrests are part of DOI's ongoing effort to deter municipal corruption and should serve as a stern warning to any citizen who might even be tempted to bribe a City worker. In each case, the DOT inspector immediately reported the attempted payoff to DOI and actually wore a concealed recorder to catch the corrupt individual in the act of bribery. The inspectors's actions are to be applauded. They represent the overwhelming majority of good, honest, and decent City employees.

The details of the investigations leading to each of the arrests are summarized below:

#### **1.) DOMENICO ANTONELLI**

The investigation began last December after DOMENICO ANTONELLI offered a DOT Highway and Sewer Inspector a \$200 payoff not to issue a summons when the inspector observed ANTONELLI repairing a sidewalk in front of 47-21 Main Street, in Flushing, Queens, without a DOT Sidewalk Construction Permit. The inspector informed ANTONELLI he would have to come back later that day, and then reported the bribe attempt to DOI. An hour later, the cooperating inspector, now wearing a concealed tape recorder, returned to the job site, but ANTONELLI was gone.

On March 19, 1999, ANTONELLI was working on a sidewalk construction job at 57-15 to 57-37 Main Street, again without a DOT permit. A DOI undercover investigator posing as an inspector approached ANTONELLI and informed him that he was performing work without a proper permit. ANTONELLI then offered and paid the undercover investigator a \$50 bribe to avoid being issued a summons.

ANTONELLI, 52, of 146-32 27th Avenue, Flushing, New York, was charged with the felony crimes of Bribery in the Third Degree and Attempted Bribery in the Third Degree. If convicted, ANTONELLI faces up to 7 years in prison.

#### **2.) MARY PAPANTONIOU**

On April 1, 1999, a DOT Highway and Sewer Inspector conducted an inspection of a sidewalk in front of

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37-02 Astoria Boulevard in Queens at the request of the former homeowner, MARY PAPANTONIOU, who indicated that she had sold the property, but that the bank was holding money in escrow until all existing sidewalk violations against the property were removed. Informed that certain violations were still not cleared, PAPANTONIOU offered the inspector an envelope, which he refused. The inspector then reported the incident to DOI. Later that same day, the cooperating inspector, wearing a concealed recording device, again met with PAPANTONIOU, who gave the inspector an envelope containing \$300 in cash to remove the sidewalk violations.

PAPANTONIOU, 48, of 157-21 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Beechhurst, New York, was charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, a Class D felony punishable by up to 7 years in prison.

Both investigations were conducted by Ronald P. Calvosa, DOI's Inspector General for the Department of Transportation, and members of his staff, including First Deputy Inspector General Mary Piechocki and Confidential Investigators Omar Sarach and Edward Zinser.

The Office of Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the cases. Assistant District Attorney Robert S. Ciesla, of the Integrity Bureau, which is under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Vincent J. Carroll and Executive Assistant District Attorney Robert D. Alexander, has been assigned to handle the matters.

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.