



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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DOI ARRESTS BROOKLYN NURSERY SCHOOL EXEC IN BRIBERY "STING" ***-- Gave Undercover Inspector \$1,000 To Ignore Fake C Of O --***

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of ZIMING SHEN, a Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, nursery school executive, for giving a \$1,000 bribe to a DOI undercover agent posing as a New York Fire Department (FDNY) inspector to ignore the school's lack of a valid City Department of Buildings (DOB) Certificate of Occupancy (C of O).

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "The undercover inspector here was paid off to disregard a very serious violation--a nursery school for 35 young children that was operating with a phony building permit. This arrest is part of DOI's ongoing effort to deter municipal corruption and should serve as fair warning to any citizen who might even be tempted to bribe a City worker."

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, an investigation began in October 2000, when the FDNY notified DOI that SHEN had apparently submitted a bogus C of O to the City Environmental Control Board (ECB) during an earlier appeal hearing.

The investigation disclosed that, on June 21, 1999, SHEN, Chief Executive Officer of Red Apple Child Development Center at 5717 7th Avenue in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, had submitted a purported C of O to the ECB, when he appealed a December 1998 violation for failure to have an FDNY fuel oil storage permit for the nursery school. After the appeal hearing, the FDNY conducted a routine review of SHEN's ECB file, noticed that the C of O appeared suspicious, and ordered a re-inspection of the nursery school--which revealed that the school occupied only 1 story of the 7th Avenue premises, not the 3 stories SHEN claimed in the C of O he had submitted to ECB.

Thereafter, the undercover, posing as an FDNY inspector, met SHEN during a January 24, 2001, inspection of the school, and informed SHEN that the school's C of O was fraudulent. The following week, on January 30, 2001, the undercover, wearing a concealed recording device, returned to the premises, and again met SHEN, who then allegedly gave the undercover \$1,000 in cash, asking him not to cite the school for failure to have a valid C of O.

SHEN, 42, of 42 Wandel Avenue on Staten Island, was charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, both Class D felonies; Rewarding Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a Class E felony; and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Third Degree, a Class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

DOI Arrests Bklyn Nursery School Exec In Bribery Sting

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen and members of his staff for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by John McMahon, DOI's Inspector General for the Fire Department, and members of his staff.

The Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Karen Turner is handling the matter.