



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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DOI ARRESTS BROOKLYN RESTAURANT OWNER IN BRIBERY "STING" ***-- Paid Undercover Agent \$100 To Ignore Health Code Violations --***

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2000 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of WONG CHUNG CHEUN, a Brooklyn restaurant owner, for paying a \$100 bribe to a DOI undercover agent posing as a City Department of Health (DOH) inspector. The payoff was allegedly in return for not reporting food storage and handling violations.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "This arrest is 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 this case, an honest health inspector refused an illegal payment, issued code infractions, and immediately reported the corrupt offer to DOI. His actions are to be commended. He represents the overwhelming majority of good, honest, and decent City employees."

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOI began an investigation in May after a DOH inspector was reportedly offered money during a routine health code inspection of the China Kettle restaurant at 6606 Avenue U in Mill Basin, Brooklyn. The inspector had reported that after he found code violations involving cold food being held at an unsafe temperature, cleaning fluid storage near food, and an untrained food handler supervising the kitchen, CHEUN, the restaurant owner, had offered him a payoff and held out a handful of cash. The inspector refused the offer, issued the appropriate violations, and immediately contacted the DOI Health Inspector General's Office.

Immediately thereafter, DOI sent an undercover agent, posing as a DOH inspector responding to a customer complaint, to conduct another inspection of the restaurant. After the undercover inspected the restaurant and pointed out violations for employees' hair being uncovered, an insufficiently trained kitchen supervisor, and exposed food, CHEUN allegedly approached him, handed him \$100 in cash, and asked him not to issue any health code violations.

CHEUN, 58, of Roslyn, Long Island, was charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, a Class D felony. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Kyle Sturcken, DOI's Inspector General for the Department of Health, and Assistant Inspector General Bradley Howard.

The Office of Brooklyn District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney James McCarthy, of the DA's Rackets Division, is handling the matter.