



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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Release #105-2009
nyc.gov/html/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2009**

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**DOI ARRESTS MANHATTAN BUSINESS OWNER CHARGED WITH
BRIBERY AND USING FORGED WORK PERMIT**

--Arrest made hours after Buildings inspector reports allegations of bribe attempt to DOI--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrest of a Manhattan business owner late Tuesday, October 6, 2009, several hours after a City Department of Buildings ("DOB") Inspector reported that the owner had offered the Inspector money not to issue a violation and stop-work order for failing to have construction plans at a Lexington Avenue construction site. The DOB Inspector refused the money and reported the incident to DOI, which immediately began an investigation. The office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "DOB's prompt report of a bribe offer allowed DOI to immediately investigate and stop the charged corruption. This arrest sends a strong message to those who seek to manipulate the inspection process through bribes and false documents - they do so at their own risk. This is one of many arrests that DOI has made based on tips from DOB employees and I commend these employees for standing up for integrity."

HERSEL HEDVAT, 52, of Paramus, N.J., has been charged with Bribery in the Third Degree and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, class D felonies. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison.

According to the criminal complaint, at about 1:15 p.m. on October 6, 2009, a DOB Inspector spoke with HEDVAT to verify that he had proper plans for the construction work being done at 1324 Lexington Ave. and asked him to produce a valid work permit. HEDVAT showed a forged work permit with a permit number associated with a different construction site and scope of work. When the DOB Inspector attempted to halt the construction, HEDVAT gave the inspector \$300 in an unsuccessful attempt to evade the impending violation and stop-work order. HEDVAT was immediately arrested.

DOB issued a stop work order at the site, which is still in effect.

DOI Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau and DOB Commissioner Robert LiMandri for their assistance in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of Inspector General for DOB, including Assistant Inspector General Byron Biggerstaff, Special Investigator Sadie Lopez and Investigative Inspector Kris Kingpayom, under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Michael Carroll.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.