



Department of Investigation *Press Release*

FIRE DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

Thomas Von Essen -- Fire Commissioner

Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen And Investigation Commissioner Edward Kuriansky Announce Arrest Of Fire Protection Inspector

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2000

New York City Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen and Department of Investigation (DOI) Commissioner Edward Kuriansky today announced the arrest of a civilian fire inspector charged with soliciting and receiving bribe money from a Bronx restaurant owner in exchange for squashing a violation order.

William Recalde, age 29, a resident of Crotona Avenue in the Bronx and a fire protection inspector with the FDNY for the last two years, was arrested Friday, Nov. 24, outside Me Rancho, a Mexican restaurant located at 6026 Broadway in the Riverdale section.

Last Tuesday, (Nov. 21) Recalde, while conducting a routine inspection of the restaurant, cited the owner for several violations, then offered to squash the violations in return for a payment of \$300. The owner gave Recalde \$130, saying that's all the money he had, and Recalde said he would return on Friday night to collect the \$170 balance.

Fire Marshals -- tipped off to the scam -- conducted an investigation and placed Recalde under arrest after he returned to the restaurant on Friday to collect the \$170.

Recalde was observed accepting the bribe money on a surveillance camera.

Fire Commissioner Von Essen said, "The Fire Department -- as it did in this case -- will utilize every resource available to aggressively pursue allegations of corruption or wrongdoing among any of its employees. I commend the work of fire marshals and investigators from the Inspector General's office (DOI) for the swift actions that have resulted in this arrest."

Commissioner Kuriansky said the investigation is continuing.

Recalde is being charged with the following: grand larceny C felony); receiving a bribe in the 3rd degree (D felony); receiving a reward for official misconduct (E felony); receiving unlawful gratuities (A misdemeanor); coercion (A misdemeanor); and official misconduct (A misdemeanor).

Recalde, one of approximately 2240 civilian fire inspectors employed by the FDNY, was assigned to District Office #5 in the Bronx. These inspectors are responsible for handling "permit accounts" generally commercial establishments where a permit is required.