



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #068-2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE	CONTACT: EMILY GEST
MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2002	(212) 825-5931

FIRE INSPECTOR ARRESTED FOR TAKING BRIBE ***-- Told landlord he wouldn't report violations if he was paid \$500 --***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the felony arrest of HASSIM MOHAMMED for allegedly taking a \$500 payoff in order to overlook fire code violations.

Mohammed, 49, of the Bronx, was arrested in the Bronx this morning after he collected \$500 from the landlord of an apartment building at 1062 Walton Ave, said Commissioner Gill Hearn. Mohammed first made contact with the building's superintendent while inspecting the boiler at the site last week. During the visit, Mohammed noticed an illegal apartment in the building's basement and told the superintendent he wouldn't report the code violation if the superintendent forked over \$500. The superintendent referred Mohammed to the building's landlord, who, in turn, notified DOI. The landlord, wearing a wire, met with Mohammed today.

Mohammed will be charged with grand larceny by extortion, receiving a bribe and official misconduct. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

"Mr. Mohammed's conduct could have jeopardized people's lives and their personal property," said Commissioner Gill Hearn. "His behavior is an affront to those who serve this city honestly and well."

Mohammed joined the Fire Department in 1993 and earns more than \$35,000 a year. He will be suspended without pay.

The investigation was conducted by Brian Foley, DOI's Inspector General for Housing Preservation & Development, Frank Sinatra, First Deputy Inspector General, and members of their staff, including Trina Jones and David Jordan. DOI Fire Department Special Investigator Frank Smith also worked on the case.

The office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the case.

Criminal complaints are merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.