



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

Release # **_19-2007**
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2007

CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

**DOI ARRESTS QUEENS TOW YARD WORKER FOR STEALING PROPERTY
FROM VAN SEIZED BY CITY MARSHAL**
--Private Tow Company Employee Charged with Theft of GPS Unit--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of LUIS F. BENITEZ, an employee of a towing contractor for a City marshal, for stealing a GPS (global positioning system) unit from a van that the marshal had seized for unpaid parking tickets.

BENITEZ, 30, of Flushing, Queens, was arrested Wednesday and charged with Petit Larceny, a class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to a year in jail. He is also suspended without pay from his job.

Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "The City marshals depended on this individual to do his job and deliver towed vehicles to their owners intact. Instead, this individual is accused of breaking that trust. Stealing isn't a perk of the job. It's a crime that can lead not only to loss of employment but to arrest and jail."

BENITEZ was hired in February as a "yard man" for Ken Ben Industries, a licensed towing company that is under contract with City Marshal Richard Capuano. When the marshal finds and seizes a scofflaw vehicle whose owner owes overdue parking fines exceeding \$350, Ken Ben Industries tows the vehicle and stores it until the marshal authorizes its release. After paying the fines and towing charges at the marshal's Rego Park office, motorists reclaim their cars at Ken Ben's storage yard. There, BENITEZ drove those cars from within the yard to its entrance and turned them over to the owners.

According to the criminal complaint, on February 27, 2007, BENITEZ stole a GPS unit from a 2006 GMC van. The van's owner immediately reported the missing item to Ken Ben, whose management recovered the GPS unit and immediately reported the matter to DOI. DOI's investigation led to BENITEZ'S arrest.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Ken Ben Industries for its cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Investigative Squad of New York City Police Department detectives, particularly Detective Leonard Mastrogiacomo, and Assistant Inspector General Pamela Woolbright of DOI's Bureau of City Marshals. The office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.***