



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**FORMER BUILDINGS INSPECTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT
TOOK CASH FROM QUEENS HOMEOWNERS IN EXCHANGE FOR NOT ISSUING VIOLATIONS**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), issued the following statement on the guilty plea of a former City Department of Buildings (“DOB”) Inspector who requested and took cash from Queens’ homeowners in exchange for not issuing violations from January 2023 through January 2024. DOI conducted this investigation after receiving allegations about this inspector from homeowners and DOB. The office of Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz prosecuted the case.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “This defendant betrayed the trust placed in him as a City Buildings Inspector to accurately identify Building Code violations and impose appropriate penalties when he abused his position of authority to seek payoffs from homeowners. His conviction shows that we will not tolerate this kind of corruption. DOI has issued — and DOB is in the process of implementing — a series of recommendations intended to close corruption vulnerabilities that DOI identified with respect to the inspection process. I thank DOB and the Queens District Attorney for their partnership in this matter and their commitment to maintaining the integrity of building inspections.”

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz said, “City employees should never scam hardworking homeowners. Instead of performing his job with integrity, this former Department of Buildings inspector was soliciting bribes. With today’s plea, this defendant will be held responsible for his conduct and will have to repay the homeowners he took advantage of. I thank the Department of Investigation and the Department of Buildings for their assistance on this prosecution.”

DOB Commissioner James Oddo said, “It is imperative that DOB continues to uphold the highest standards of integrity, both in the construction industry and within our own ranks. When we became aware of this former employee’s actions, we immediately referred the issue to our partners in law enforcement and have worked closely with them throughout their investigation. This individual is no longer a member of the department, and in the interest of public safety we have already conducted a thorough audit of their previous work here at DOB. We thank the Queens District Attorney’s Office and the Department of Investigation for helping to secure a conviction in this important case.”

ZABIHULLAH IBRAHIMI, 42, of Flushing, Queens, was arrested in April 2024 and charged with three counts each of Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree and Official Misconduct in connection with three separate incidents where he asked Queens homeowners to provide him cash in exchange for closing out their inspections without issuing any violations. Today, IBRAHIMI pleaded guilty to one count of Official Misconduct, which is a class A misdemeanor, and was sentenced to a conditional discharge and ordered to pay \$1,440 in restitution, the amount of the cash he took from the homeowners.

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IBRAHIMI began working for DOB in March 2020 and resigned in May 2024 following his arrest. At the time of his resignation, he was receiving an annual salary of approximately \$61,800.

IBRAHIMI was a member of DOB's Quality of Life unit, which conducts inspections to determine whether private residences have been illegally converted to multi-family dwellings. According to the criminal complaint, in three separate incidents between January 2023 and January 2024, the defendant told the homeowners he found violations at their homes, but closed their cases in DOB's database without issuing any violations, in exchange for cash payments from the homeowners. In two of those cases, the defendant falsely indicated that he could not access the property to avoid recording a violation at the property. [Click here to read details regarding the arrest charges.](#)

Under DOB protocols, if an inspector is unable to gain access to a property to conduct an inspection, the inspector must post a notice on the property informing the property owner to contact DOB to schedule an inspection. This notice is referred to as an "LS-4," and DOB provides these blank forms to inspectors. The inspector must officially document in DOB's systems the issuance of this LS-4, including the starting and ending time of the attempted inspection and other relevant comments or supporting documents, if any.

DOI's investigation identified corruption vulnerabilities in the inspection process and recommended a number of Policy and Procedural Reforms to strengthen the controls around these inspections. The proposed Reforms include a recommendation that DOB analyze the location and time-related data available to it in order to confirm an inspector's presence, or absence, at a property, and that DOB enhance its internal inventory controls on the blank LS-4s it provides to its inspectors. [For more information on these PPRs, please click here.](#) DOB has accepted each of the recommendations and is in the process of implementing them.

This case was prosecuted by the Assistant District Attorney Gabriella Giunta of the Queens District Attorney's Public Corruption Bureau and was supervised by Assistant District Attorneys Khadijah Muhammad-Starling and Christine Olivera, Bureau Chief and Deputy Bureau Chief, respectfully, and Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

At DOI, this case was investigated by Confidential Investigator Olivia Tonge, assisted by Junior Auditor Kristie Parisi, and supervised by Deputy Inspectors General Kim Ryan-Flores and Ed Zinser, Inspector General Gregory Cho, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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