



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Letizia Tagliaferro

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STATE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES EXAMINER GROPED AND BRIBED PROSPECTIVE DRIVERS DURING THEIR ROAD TESTS

NEW YORK CITY – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliaferro and Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today the arrest of a former State Department of Motor Vehicles (“DMV”) road test examiner accused of groping, demanding bribes and stealing from prospective drivers, all female, whom he would then sign off for a license before ever finishing the road tests he was administering.

Ian Alexander Cioffi, 35, of Stewart Manor, was arrested and charged today with Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, Attempted Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, and Impairing the Integrity of a Government Licensing Examination, all felonies, and Forcible Touching and Receiving Unlawful Gratuities, both misdemeanors.

The charges allege Cioffi, who resigned from his State position in May 2018, demanded or stole cash from and groped women to whom he was administering driver license road tests, and that he gave a passing grade to hopeful drivers after taking their cash or inappropriately touching them and before completing the test. An investigation also found that he failed a driver who refused to give him money.

Inspector General Tagliaferro said, “This defendant used his position of authority to extort and abuse vulnerable New Yorkers while controlling the outcome of a critical test that was anything but routine and fair. He violated the public trust, corrupted a basic test every driver must take and defiled the critical work of other honest DMV employees who work hard every day registering and licensing drivers across the State. I thank Queens District Attorney Brown and his office for their partnership in bringing this individual to face justice.”

Queens Chief Assistant District Attorney John M. Ryan, on behalf of District Attorney Brown, said, “Every individual who steps into an automobile to take a road test at a DMV office, should be free from being touched inappropriately by the examiner and at no time should cash be exchanged or taken by an official. The defendant in this case allegedly took advantage of his position of power to line his own pockets and to satisfy his sexual desires. I want to thank the New York State Inspector General’s Office for its hard work on this case. And I want to assure the public, that my office will continue to work diligently with all our law enforcement partners to keep all residents, visitors and those who work in Queens County safe.”

An investigation by the Offices of the Inspector General, as detailed in charging documents, found that on several occasions in early 2018, Cioffi administered DMV driving tests in Queens – which were required to qualify for a New York State driver license – at which he would demand bribes or steal from prospective drivers during the test, or grope them. For example, the investigation found that on Feb. 9, 2018, during a road test in Kissena Park, Cioffi asked a prospective driver during her test for “coffee,” which the driver later found out meant cash. That driver told Cioffi she had no money and he failed her. Cioffi made the same request of the

very next driver who spoke little English, gestured that he meant cash, and then grabbed her bag from the back seat and handed it to the driver. When that driver opened her wallet, Cioffi took \$400 from it and instructed the driver to drive back to the test site while placing a finger over his lips. That driver received a passing grade on the road test.

Similarly, at a road test site in Astoria on March 14, 2018, Cioffi was administering a test to a female driver when he asked her if she had any money. The investigation found the driver told Cioffi that she had no money so he took hold of the steering, pulled the car to the curb and demanded \$100 for a passing grade. The driver again told Cioffi she had no money and reached for her cellular telephone which Cioffi grabbed from her and then asked for \$20, which she refused. Shortly thereafter, Cioffi placed his hand on the female driver's leg as well as down her shirt, after which he informed her that she passed without having had her perform a required three-point turn or to parallel park.

At the Whitestone road test site April 4, 2018, Cioffi again asked a female prospective driver for cash during a road test, grabbed her bag from the back seat and took \$40 of the total of \$47 she had in her wallet before putting his finger to his lips and giving her a passing grade.

Cioffi is expected to be arraigned on the charges in Queens Criminal Court later today. Anyone who may have additional information about this case is encouraged to contact the Offices of the New York State Inspector General hotline at (800) 367-4448.

Inspector General Tagliafierro thanked the DMV for their assistance with the investigation and Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown and his office for prosecuting the case.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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