



Memorandum



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To: The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
The Honorable Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Chairman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Mary T. Cagle, Inspector General

Date: November 21, 2017

Subject: MDAD Permittee Pleas Guilty, Ref. IG16-16

An OIG investigation concluded today with the criminal court guilty plea of Eric Hanson, an MDAD Permittee, who provided false documents to obtain an MDAD Permit and an MDAD Identification Badge. This matter was referred to the OIG by MDAD after the County's Passenger Transportation Regulatory Division's Enforcement Officers¹ cited Hanson, on several occasions, for soliciting the traveling public inside the MIA terminal for chauffeur transportation services. When confronted by the Enforcement Officers, he claimed to work for several delayed baggage service companies. The Enforcement Officers cited him for *Solicitation/Carrying on Business* without proper licenses. It was noted that while Hanson had a Permit to conduct his delayed baggage service business on MDAD property, the Permit's scope did not authorize chauffeuring services.

During the Permit revocation process, it was determined that both the original issue and the renewal of his MDAD Permit and Identification Badge were based upon fraudulent documents. Hanson had submitted a fake contract, purportedly between his business and an airline, to provide the airline with delayed baggage services. The airline stated that the contract was a total fabrication. The OIG further determined that the Permittee had also submitted fraudulent Certificates of Insurance to MDAD.

The OIG confronted Hanson, who admitted his culpability. The OIG also confirmed that Hanson was never granted access to any MDAD secure area pursuant to his Permit or through the access afforded by his identification badge. The OIG reviewed Hanson's security badge swipes and confirmed that he had never attempted to gain access to any MDAD secure area.

Hanson was prosecuted for obtaining items of value (an MDAD Permit and ID Card) through fraudulent pretenses. Hanson pled guilty to two counts of Petit Theft, both first degree misdemeanors, and was sentenced to two years of probation. As part of the sentence, he must repay costs of investigation, perform 48 hours of community service,

¹ A division of the Miami-Dade County Regulatory and Economic Resources Department (RER).

stipulate that he is debarred from contracting with the County for 5 years pursuant to County Code, and stay away from all MDAD properties unless he is a ticketed passenger. This case was investigated with the assistance of the State Attorney's Office (SAO). Attached is the SAO's press release with further details about the case.

The OIG appreciates the referral from MDAD and the continued cooperation from both MDAD and RER staff during this investigation.

cc: Alex Ferro, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Jack Osterholt, Deputy Mayor/Director, Regulatory and Economic Resources Dept.
Emilio Gonzalez, Director, Miami-Dade Aviation Department
Cathy Jackson, Interim Commission Auditor
and Director, Audit and Management Services Department



KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE

STATE ATTORNEY



ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Individual Pleads Guilty for Fraudulently Obtaining Airport Permit and Badge to Illegally Conduct his Chauffeuring Business

Miami – November 21, 2017

Pursuant to a joint criminal investigation by the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office with the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and stemming from a complaint by the Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD), Eric Hanson pled guilty today to 2 counts of Petit Theft for fraudulently obtaining and renewing both a MDAD Permit and an Identification Badge.

"As one of this community's economic engines, Miami International Airport must have clear and strict ongoing policies to protect the integrity of our for-hire and chauffeuring services available to our travelers," commented State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. "Individuals who try to circumvent these established policies by using fraudulent documents and fake contracts harm our legitimate contractors and may endanger our visitors and residents. There can be no excuse for such behavior."

The County's Passenger Transportation Regulatory Division had cited Eric Hanson at least three times, each after observing him approach international passengers who were exiting the Customs area. When confronted, Hanson claimed to work for several delayed baggage service companies. He was cited for Solicitation or Carrying on Business without Proper Licenses. It was noted that while Hanson had a permit to conduct business on MDAD property, the permit did not cover chauffeuring services.

After the third citation, MDAD moved to revoke his permit. During this process, it was discovered that Hanson obtained his MDAD permit and identification badge based upon fraudulent documents. The investigation also revealed that Hanson provided MDAD with a fake contract between his business and Lufthansa German Airlines to supposedly provide delayed baggage services. The case was referred to the OIG for follow-up investigation. The airline identified the contract as a total fabrication. The OIG also determined that fraudulent Certificates of Insurance were also submitted by Hanson to MDAD. The OIG confronted Hanson, who admitted his crimes and took full responsibility. As part of the investigation, the OIG confirmed that MDAD never granted Hanson access to any secure area of MDAD pursuant to his permit/identification badge. Further, a review of security swipes of his identification badge revealed that he had never attempted to gain access to MDAD secure areas. In commenting on the case, Miami-Dade County Inspector General Mary Cagle stated, "I would like to thank the vigilant County employee who identified the fraudulent permit application. Ensuring proper credentials is key to airport security."

Hanson was sentenced to 2 year probation. He must pay for the costs of investigation, perform 48 hours of community service, stay away from MDAD properties unless he is a ticketed passenger, and stipulate that he is debarred from contracting with the County for 5 years, pursuant to County Code.

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FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT:

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