### Agenda: Item 3

Disciplinary Case: <u>Taxi Commission v. Driss Elassali (Elassali II)</u> [ACTION]

• Consideration of Summary Suspension of P-44 Driver's Permit # 52819 for Violations of California Vehicle Code §§ 12500(a), 14601.1(a), MPC §§ 1089(a), and Rules 6.A.1, 6.A.2, 6.A.4, and 6.B.5

#### CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



#### TAXI COMMISSION MAYOR GAVIN C. NEWSOM

PAUL GILLESPIE, PRESIDENT PATRICIA BRESLIN, VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD BENJAMIN, COMMISSIONER TOM ONETO, COMMISSIONER MIN PAEK, COMMISSIONER SUSAN SUVAL COMMISSIONER ARTHUR TOM, COMMISSIONER

### **TAXI COMMISSION** CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

### ORDER TO APPEAR **NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION ON PERMIT**

### SAN FRANCISCO TAXI COMMISSION CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

#### COMPLAINT ON SUMMARY SUSPENSION

- 1. Complaint is hereby made against Driss "Kiki" Elassali, Taxi Driver ("A-card") Permit # 52819, that said Permit Holder has conducted his business in a disorderly manner and violated provisions of the *Taxicab and Ramped Taxi Rules & Regulations* and the Municipal Police Code as described below.
- 2. Mr. Elassali has been a P-44 Taxi Driver Permit ("A-card") holder with the City and County of San Francisco since 2000. He does not hold any other type of permit with the City and County of San Francisco. Officially, he claims to be driving for United Cab at present time. (See Exhibit A, screenprint from Treasurer/Tax Collector's records.)
- 3. Mr. Elassali first came to the attention of the Taxi Commission in Summer 2007 when the office began to receive numerous complaints about illegal "brokering" or "managing" of medallions in the taxicab industry. Investigation revealed severe problems perpetuated by Mr. Elassali and others who are also brokering medallions. A complaint was filed as a result, and went to a hearing officer. In addition to alleging the series of violations of various rules, the complaint asked for revocation of Mr. Elassali's A-card on the basis of two theories: (1) that Mr. Elassali was violating the so-called "three-layer lease rule" described at Rule 6.A.11, and/or (2) that Mr. Elassali was operating a color scheme (taxicab company) without a permit. The hearing officer's recommendation appears on the November 25, 2008 calendar for the Commission's review.
- 4. On August 22, 2008, while the recommendation was still pending from the hearing officer, the Taxi Commission and the Taxi Detail summarily suspended Mr. Elassali's A-card when it was discovered by the Police Department that he does not hold a valid California driver's license as

required by the Municipal Police Code and the Taxicab/Ramped Taxi Rules & Regulations.

- 5. Royal Taxi also reported that Mr. Elassali owned a Ford Taurus vehicle no longer associated with Royal Taxi after the medallion holder left the company. Mr. Elassali allegedly rented the vehicle out to drivers even though it was no longer associated with Royal or any other taxicab company, and he retained possession of not only the 2-way radio, but the decals and transponders, which are actually City property, in an effort to make the vehicle look like a legitimate taxicab and evade enforcement action upon the vehicle's operation in the City and at the Airport. (See Exhibit B, SFPD Incident Report # 080914374.)
- 6. While he was suspended, Mr. Elassali committed further violations. Specifically, he operated Luxor Vehicle # 675, held by Scott Van Leuven, despite having no California driver's license and no A-card. On August 31, 2008, while travelling on Geary Blvd, Mr. Elassali came upon a DUI checkpoint. The officer discovered that Mr. Elassali did not have a company ID, a valid A-card, or a valid California driver's license. The officer asked Mr. Elassali where his driver's license was, and Mr. Elassali said he owned the vehicle and that his license was at home. In fact, this was a false statement in violation of MPC § 1110 and Rule 6.A.4, because as of August 31, 2008, Mr. Elassali knew that his A-card was suspended and that his California driver's license was suspended. Additionally, Mr. Elassali did not own that vehicle it was owned by Luxor Cab and Scott van Leuven (registration to be provided at hearing.) Despite this knowledge, he made false statements to a San Francisco Police Department officer. The officer issued Mr. Elassali a Citation # 000774686 (Exhibit C).
- 7. Since the filing of the original complaint on March 25, 2008, and continuing through to the present time, the Taxi Commission and the Taxi Detail have continued to receive reports that Mr. Elassali is brokering medallions, driving taxicab vehicles in violation of his suspension, and most recently, illegally operating a white limousine in the City and County of San Francisco without a permit. Mr. Elassali told an Airport employee and a fellow taxi driver, Gerson Garcia, that he was operating a Town Car vehicle and "didn't care" about the Taxi Commission's actions against him.

1 See Exhibit D, Declaration of Gerson Garcia. A check with the California Public Utilities 2 Commission reveals that Mr. Elassali does not hold a permit to operate a limousine in California. 3 See Exhibit E, Declaration of Robert Degroot. 4 8. California Vehicle Code § 12500 (a) states: 5 A person may not drive a motor vehicle upon a highway, unless the person then 6 holds a valid driver's license issued under this code, except those persons who are expressly exempted under this code. 7 California Vehicle Code § 14601.1 (a) states: 8 No person shall drive a motor vehicle when his or her driving privilege is suspended 9 or revoked for any reason other that those listed in Section 14601, 14601.2 or 14601.5, if the person so driving has knowledge of the suspension or revocation. 10 Knowledge shall be conclusively presumed if mailed notice has been given by the department to the person pursuant to section 13106. the presumption established by 11 this subdivisions a presumption affecting the burden of proof. 12 Municipal Police Code § 1089 (a) states: 13 (a) Permit Required. It shall be unlawful for any person to act as a driver of any 14 motor vehicle for hire licensed pursuant to this Article unless that person holds a driver's permit from the Police Department issued pursuant to this section. 15 Municipal Police Code § 1090(a) provides as follows: 16 (a) Revocation for Cause. Any permit issued under this Article may be suspended or 17 revoked by the [Taxi Commission] for good cause after a noticed hearing. "Good cause" hereunder shall include but shall not be limited to, the following... 18 (iv) The permittee or an agent of the permittee knowingly made false statements to 19 or concealed information from the Taxi Commission, the Executive Director, or the Police Department... 20 (viii) The permittee violated the Traffic Code of the City and County of San 21 Francisco or the Vehicle Code or related laws of the State of California. 22 (ix) The permittee violated any applicable statute, ordinance, rule or regulation pertaining to the operation or licensing of the vehicles and services regulated by this 23 Article... 24 Upon a showing of good cause, the [Taxi Commission] shall have discretion to suspend or revoke a permit as set forth above, except that a suspension and/or 25 revocation shall be mandatory in the circumstances described in subparts (i) through (iv) above. 26 27

revocation for good cause, including but not limited to the circumstances described above. Mr. Elassail has repeatedly flouted the law and repeatedly demonstrated he has a lack of respect for the Taxi Commission and the San Francisco Police Department. He has violated Vehicle Code §§ 12500(a) and 14601.1(a); MPC §§ 1089(a) and 1110; Rules 6.A.1, 6.A.2, 6.A.4, and 6.B.5. Pursuant to MPC § 1090(a)(iii), (iv), and (ix), his P-44 driver's permit must be revoked.

10. This Complaint shall constitute the Executive Director's Notice pursuant to MPC § 1188. Pursuant to agreement with Mr. Elassali's counsel, this complaint shall be heard on shortened notice. A list of witnesses shall be provided to Mr. Elassali at least five days prior to the hearing. The hearing shall occur on December 9, 2008 at 6:30 pm in Room 400 of San Francisco City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102.



#### CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



### TAXI COMMISSION MAYOR GAVIN NEWSOM

COMMISSIONERS TELEPHONE (415) 114-1111

PAUL OILLESPIE, PRESIDENT, ext. 3 PATRICIA BRESLIN, VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD BENJAMIN, COMMISSIONER and 1 TOM ONETO, COMMISSIONER, pd. 6 MIN PAEK, COMMISSIONER and 7 R. JAMES SLAUGHTER, COMMISSIONER EXLA SUSAN SUVAL, COMMISSIONER, and 5

JORDANNA THIGHEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



August 22, 2008

Mr. Driss Elassali VIA PERSONAL SERVICE San Francisco, CA 94102

Subject: Summary Suspension of P-44 Permit #52819

Dear Mr. Elassali:

Pursuant to Municipal Police Code § 1090(c), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that as of August 22. 2008, the San Francisco Taxi Commission and the San Francisco Police Department Taxi Detail have summarily suspended your DRIVER FOR PUBLIC VEHICLE FOR HIRE PERMIT # 5 2819

You do not have a valid California driver's license as required by the Municipal Police Code and the Taxicab/Ramped Taxi Rules and Regulations. In addition, you are in possession of a taxicab vehicle, which property which been declared lost property by Royal Taxi pursuant to Case # 08-16153, including transponder #187972, a 2-way taxicab radio, and a 2005 red/gold Ford Taurus, and the airport decal SFIA # 5993. Royal Taxi reports you refused to return this property to them upon request and that you have been operating the vehicle as a taxicab vehicle and renting it out to drivers, even though that vehicle is no longer associated with any taxicab company. Such conduct constitutes operating without a permit and illegal brokering/leading of a taxicab vehicle.

You have the right to appeal this suspension to the Taxicab Commission. Written notice of appeal must be filed with the Director of the San Francisco Taxi Commission at 35 Van Ness Avenue, Rm 420, San Francisco, CA 94102, within 10 days after receipt of this letter. You are entitled to a hearing within thirty (30) days after the filing of the notice of appeal. You are strongly advised to hire an attorney to represent you and have the right to be represented by an attorney at the proceedings.

YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED to immediately surrender your badge, "A-card," Taxicab Photo Identification, and the city property which you are in now in possession of to the Taxicab Detail upon receipt of this notice.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact the Taxi Commission at (415) 503-2180.

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Executive Director

Ron Reynolds

Officer-in-Charge, SFPD Taxi Detail

Lieutenant, SFPD

8/21/08

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## San Francisco Police Department INCIDENT REPORT

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San Francisco Police Department PROPERTY LISTINGS

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# San Francisco Police Department VEHICLE INFORMATION

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Narrative:

On 08/20/2008 I received a report from Capt. A. Casciato # 239 documenting a decommissioned San Francisco Taxicab (T) Ca. plate 8K43962 parked on the corner of Buchanan & Golden Gate Ave. The Taxicab photographs revealed that the Airport decals were still displayed, the transponder was still on top of the vehicle and the "TAXI" bubble light was still on top of the vehicle. When a legitimate San Francisco taxicab is decommissioned the above listed items have to be removed and turned into the (GTU) Airport Ground Transportation Unit by law.

I immediately contacted Dan Borg of the GTU and he stated the following:

Taxicab # 899 was a former Royal taxicab that was decommissioned for another vehicle. Every taxicab medallion has one vehicle assigned to it. When an old taxicab is replaced with a new vehicle, the old vehicle has to turn in the Airport decals and transponder to the GTU. The decals and transponder is the property of the San Francisco Airport. GTU contacted (S) Elassali/Driss who was the registered owner of taxicab # 899 (T) Ca. plate 8K43962 and requested the decals and transponder be returned. Elassali refused to comply with GTU's request. On 06/09/2008 the GTU filed a San Francisco Police Airport Bureau incident report 08-16153 reporting the transponder and decal as lost or stolen.

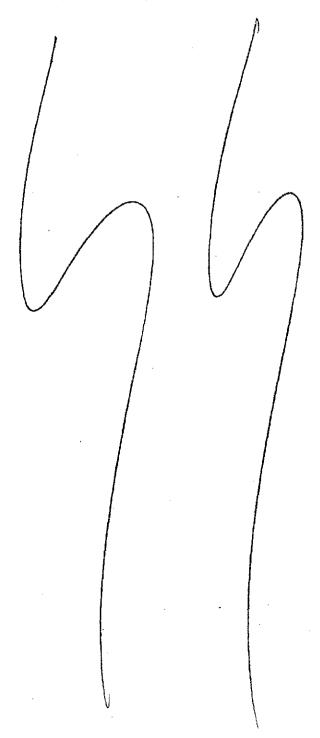
A computer check revealed that Elassali's drivers license had been suspend or revoked. The reason for Elassali's DL suspension was failure to appear, notice mailed 06/19/08. A check of Taxi Detail records showed that Elassali had an active Driver for Public Vehicle for Hire permit # 52819. The Municipal Police Code requires all Drivers for Public Vehicle for Hire permits (A-card) to have a valid California's Drivers License. I contacted Elassali by telephone and requested that he come to the Taxi Detail to be interviewed regarding his drivers license and the status of taxicab # 899. Elassali stated he would come to the unit. I then contacted the Taxi Commission and discussed suspending Elassali's Driver for Public Vehicle for Hire permit. The Taxi Commission agreed on the suspension.

On 08/22/08 at 1400 hrs. Elassali arrived at the Taxi Detail. I brought Elassali into the Taxi Detail and read him his Beheler Admonition. I requested to see his drivers license and his A Card. Elassali presented a valid A-Card and stated he had forgotten his drivers license at home. confronted Elassali about his suspended drivers license. He stated he moved and didn't know the license was suspended. I informed him his license was suspended and he could not operate any vehicle until he took care of several court appearances that he failed to appear on. He stated he understood. I also served him with suspension papers for his Driver for Public Vehicle for Hire permit. I explained he could not operate a taxicab in San Francisco until he had his drivers license renewed. Elassali stated he understood. I then seized his Driver for Public Vehicle for Hire permit. advised Elassali that he was in possession of lost or stolen property from the San Francisco Airport and a police file had been filed. I asked Elassali where the property was. He advised me that the taxicab was parked on Golden Gate between Webster and Buchahan. I immediately sent a marked police vehicle to that location to tow the taxicab. I then advised Elassali he needed to present me with a valid California Drivers License on Tuesday and I would return his Driver of Public Vehicle for Hire permit. I would allow him to remove the "Taxi" bubble light, transponder and Airport Decal from ataxicab # 899. After I received these lost/stolen items I would return taxicab # 899 to him. He stated The understood. I then asked Elassali why he didn't open up his own taxicab company with the medallions he was brokering? He told me he was smart and if he followed the rules and opened his wown taxicab company he wouldn't make any money. I told Elassali if he continued this behavior, he would continue to be cited, have his vehicles towed ,have his A-Card revoked and face arrest.

Elassali just smiled and didn't respond to my statement.

On 08/26/08 at 1415 hrs. Elassali returned with a California Drivers License in his possession. I conducted a computer check and discovered that Elassali's drivers license was still expired. refused to return his A-Card or vehicle to him.

On 09/02/08 at 0815 hrs. I was had a phone message from Luxor Cab company stating that (S) Elassali had been driving Luxor Taxicab # 675 Ca. plate # 8G23102 on 08/31/2008. On 08/31/2008 at 2015 hrs. Elassali got stopped at a DUI Check point at Geary and 10th Ave in San Francisco, California. Sgt Ed Callejas # 219 stopped Elassali and discovered he had no license in his possession. A computer check revealed that Elassali drivers license was suspended. Elassali stated, "I left my license at home and I own this cab." Officer Meyer 1538 issued Elassali a citation for 14601 1a CVC and towed taxicab 675.



### 14601 CVC REPORT

TRAFFIC VIOLATION CITATION

810191212121816	CAD NO.
	INCIDENT CODE 65016 ASSIGNED TO 4A200
SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT SUS D. 07-19-08 CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO 000774686	HOW CLEARED 7 COPIES FOR TRAFFIC 2, D.A
	SUSPENSIONS
	SUSPENSIONS  EFF. DATE AUTHORITY SERVICE COD  1. 2. 3. 4. 5.  DMV 310 FORM COMPLETED YES  NO  SERVICE COD  DICENSE ATTACHED YES NO  SUCCESSE ATTACHED YES NO  SUSPECT'S DRIVERS LICENSE OR ID NG.  NO LICENSE ISSUED  ROADWAY CONDITIONS  OFFICER LOCATION AT TIME OF VIOLATION  VEHICLE DISPOSITION TOWED YES NO  SUCCESSED NO  TOWED YES TOWED YES NO  TOWED YES NO  TOWED YES TOWED YES NO  TOWED YES TOWED YES TOWED YES TOWED YES NO  TOWED YES TOWED YES TOWED YES TOWED YES NO  TOWED YES TOW
000774686	
ORTING OFFICER (PRINT AND SIGNATURE) / STAR	O.I.C. APPROVAL (PRINT AND SIGNATURE) / STAR

#### DECLARATION OF GERSON GARCIA

- 1. I am over the age of 18 and not a party to this action, and I am a citizen of the United States.
- 2. My name is Gerson Garcia, and my business address is the San Francisco International Airport. I am employed as Shift Manager. I am responsible for overseeing the taxi dispatchers and taxi operations, lots, and curbside program at the Airport involving taxicabs.

  In that capacity, and as part of my regular duties, I have the opportunity to meet many taxi drivers and become familiar with them. I also hold A-card # 44391 issued by the City and County of San Francisco.
- 3. I have been familiar with Mr. Driss "Kiki" Elassali for many years, at least five years, because I have seen him around the taxi lots.
- 4. On November 5, 2008 I was walking through Terminal 1 in the performance of my official duties when I saw Mr. Elassali waiting with a friend outside the security area. His friend was about to board an airplane leaving from Terminal 1. I went over to Mr. Elassali to inquire about the fact that the Taxi Commission and the Taxi Detail were looking for him. At first we spoke about the taxi industry. He complained about the business and also about the Commission's action against him. He said "the lady over there is going after me, but not going after the big corruption in the industry." He continued to complain about the action against him and said "it's simple. They don't know what they are doing." I advised him not to come to the Airport and not to make any trouble. He said "I don't care about the case, because I drive a Town Car now." He told me "everything has been taken care of with the Police Department." I didn't understand what he meant by that. We

6. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed: Date: 11-20-2008

Gerson Garcia

Executed in San Francisco, California

spoke in total for about ten or fifteen minutes.

#### PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



FILE: None

#### DECLARATION OF ROBERT E. DEGROOT

#### I, Robert E. DeGroot, declare as follows:

- I am a Senior Transportation Representative with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and am a supervisor in its License Section. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein and, if called to do so, I could and would competently testify to the facts set forth herein and to my beliefs based thereon under oath.
- 2. The License Section is responsible for licensing household goods carriers and "for-hire" highway carriers of passengers operating within the State of California and for assigning and issuing file numbers (often referred to as "T" numbers and "PSG" numbers, respectively) to them. The License Section is also responsible for registering private (not-for-hire) carriers of passengers and interstate motor carriers of passengers which operate in California.
- 3. Under the License Section's records disposal program, the files of expired, cancelled, or revoked carriers are kept for a period of three years from the date of expiration, cancellation, or revocation.
- 4. I have made a diligent search of our License Section records to ascertain the license status of DRISS ELASSALI. Our records fail to indicate that this individual has ever held or applied for operating authority as a charter-party passenger carrier from the Commission.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 7th day of November 2008.

Robert E. DeGroot, Senior Transportation Representative

License Section

Consumer Protection and Safety Division