

David Pollack ·
From Where I Sit

Who Was Responsible For Artificially Inflating Medallion Prices?

Journalist Brian Rosenthal, whose NYTIMES piece on the downfall of the NYC medallion industry is making a resurgence, yet still refuses to include two important facts:

The New York City Department of Finance refused to approve the transfer of a medallion selling for less than the previous high price!

New York City set the “upstart” bid (beginning price of bids) at over \$800,000! New York City advertised the medallion auction. Prior to the last auctions, Conan Freud, Part of the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission, sent letters to industry advocates, urging a successful auction.

Prior to one of the auctions, the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission held an informational public “medallion auction faire.” I attended that faire from beginning to end, and witnessed less than one handful of interested buyers. The UBER table had a line “out the door.” The next day, Mr. Freud told me what a success the “medallion faire” was.

I believe Brian Rosenthal conveniently avoided reporting on the above. Lending institutions who may or may not have taken advantage of immigrants was a much better story than the decline of medallion values caused by New York City. It's easy to point the entire blame on “financial predators” while avoiding responsible facts.

Mr. Rosenthal won a Pulitzer, a Peabody and an Emmy for his investigative report while barely mentioning the sad truth about New York City's government hand in artificially inflating medallion prices for years.