

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pleasantville Man Convicted of Being “Bagman” for Corrupt Payments to Board of Education Member

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Pleasantville man was convicted by a federal jury today of aiding and abetting former Pleasantville Board of Education member Maurice “Pete” Callaway in the receipt of cash bribes, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

After five hours of deliberations that began and ended today, the jury convicted Louis Servon Mister, 57, of one count of aiding and abetting the attempted obstruction of commerce by extortion under color of official right, which carries a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, and one count of accepting and agreeing to accept a bribe, which carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

The jury acquitted Mister of the other two counts on which he was tried: conspiracy to commit extortion under color of official right, and another count of aiding and abetting the attempted obstruction of commerce by extortion under color of official right.

U.S. District Judge Jerome B. Simandle, who presided over the six-day trial, continued Mister’s release on a \$200,000 unsecured bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for Sept. 5, 2008.

The jury convicted Mister of aiding and abetting Callaway’s receipt of corrupt cash payments, which Callaway accepted in exchange for using his official position to steer Pleasantville Board of Education roofing business to a cooperating witness. During the trial, the jury heard testimony that the defendant accepted two cash payments of \$1,500 each from the cooperating witness, which the defendant then gave to Callaway.

Callaway pleaded guilty on Nov. 1, 2007, before Judge Simandle to attempted extortion under color of official right; his sentencing is pending. At his plea hearing, Callaway admitted that on June 5, 2006, he directed Mister to accept the two separate corrupt cash payments on his behalf. Callaway admitted that the corrupt payments were paid to him, through Mister.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Simandle will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. Judge Simandle is not bound by the guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, for the investigation leading to the conviction. He also credited prosecutors and investigators with the Atlantic County Prosecutor’s Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Theodore F.L. Housel, for their assistance in the investigation .

The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jenny R. Kramer and Hallie

A. Mitchell of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

– end –

Defense Counsel: Lisa Van Hoeck, Esq., Assistant Federal Public Defender
 Brian Reilly, Esq., Assistant Federal Public Defender