



United States Attorney District of New Jersey

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MEMBER OF WITNESS BRIBERY CONSPIRACY INVOLVING PROMINENT NEWARK ATTORNEY PLEADS GUILTY

NEWARK, N.J. – A Newark man who claimed responsibility for a crime he did not commit as part of a conspiracy to hinder the prosecution of a convicted felon pleaded guilty today to offenses arising from his role in the scheme, U.S. Attorney Fishman announced.

Jamal Muhammad, 32, was arrested and charged in September in a second superseding Indictment along with prominent attorney Clifford J. Minor, 68, also of Newark, and Abdul Williams, 33, of East Orange, N.J. Each is charged with various offenses for allegedly hindering the prosecution of a state case against Williams stemming from his June 8, 2007, arrest for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Muhammad entered his guilty plea to one count of conspiracy to use interstate facility to facilitate bribery (Count Three) and one count of use of interstate facility to commit bribery (Count Four) before United States District Judge Dickinson R. Debevoise in Newark federal court.

According to the second superseding Indictment to which Muhammad pleaded guilty and statements made in court:

Williams, who was incarcerated at the Essex County jail following his June 2007 arrest, met with Minor at the jail a few weeks after he was arrested. During that meeting, Minor agreed to accept \$3,500 to escort Muhammad to the Newark Police Department to confess to possessing the firearm for which Williams had been arrested, a crime Minor knew Muhammad had not committed. In exchange for the money, Minor brought Muhammad to the Newark Police Department, where they further rehearsed what Muhammad would say in his statement. Muhammad then gave a formal statement to Newark police officers in which he falsely claimed he was the one who possessed the firearm in question on June 8, 2007. In response to a federal investigation into the matter in 2009, Minor had Muhammad sign retention agreements which misrepresented that Muhammad had paid Minor legal fees in connection with his representation. In fact, the fees had been paid to Minor on behalf of Williams.

Muhammad faces a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each of the two counts to which he pleaded guilty. Sentencing is scheduled for February 22, 2011.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special

Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, with the investigation leading to today's guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony J. Mahajan of the United States Attorney's Office Narcotics/Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Unit, and Robert Frazer, of the Office's Organized Crime/Gangs Unit in Newark.

As for defendants Minor and Williams, the charges and allegations against them are merely accusations, and they are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defense counsel: Michael V. Gilberti, Esq. Red Bank, N.J.