

NEWS

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Assistant U.S. Attorney
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2, 2010

Woodbridge Man Admits to Stealing Over \$900,000 from Local
Interstate Trucking Company

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NEWARK – A former employee of a Hudson County based interstate trucking company pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to commit mail fraud in connection with his scheme to defraud the business of over \$900,000, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Herbert Rodriguez, 44, of Woodbridge, a former employee of J.F. Lomma, Inc., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden to a one-count Information. Judge Hayden released the defendant on a \$50,000 bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for June 7.

At his plea hearing, Rodriguez admitted that from December 2000 until August 2005, he conspired with John Santini, 62, currently residing in Casselberry, Fla., and others to submit fictitious vendor invoices to J.F. Lomma, Inc. As a result, Rodriguez obtained hundreds of checks from his employer totaling more than \$900,000, which were cashed at a check-cashing business located in Newark.

Santini pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden on Jan. 25, 2010, to a one-count Information that charged him with conspiracy to commit mail fraud. Judge Hayden continued Santini's release on a \$250,000 bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for May 17.

The charge of conspiracy to commit mail fraud carries a maximum statutory penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In Pleading guilty to an Information, a defendant waives his right to have his case presented to a grand jury and, instead, pleads guilty to charges presented by the government.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Hayden 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. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Fishman credited the Postal Inspectors of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector in Charge David L. Collins, and the Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Kevin B. Cruise, with the investigation.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna Gallucio of the Commercial Crimes Unit in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Ronald J. Ricci, Esq. Woodland Park