

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor  
Newark, New Jersey 07102

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***Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney***

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***More Information?*** Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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marc0313.rel  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 13, 2007

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Newark Municipal Court Clerk Arrested,  
Charged with Taking Bribes to Erase Criminal Record

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(More)

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NEWARK – A Newark Municipal Court Clerk was arrested today, charged with extorting cash bribes from an undercover agent for using his official position to help an individual unlawfully sanitize that person’s criminal record and pass a U.S. Department of Homeland Security background check, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie and FBI Acting Special Agent in Charge Pedro Ruiz announced.

Louis March, 38, was arrested this morning at his Newark home on a Criminal Complaint by Special Agents of the FBI and investigators from the Newark Police Department’s Office of Professional Standards. March was scheduled to make an initial appearance this afternoon at 2:30 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald J. Hedges.

According to the criminal Complaint, March accepted cash payments totaling \$4,000 from an undercover agent (UC) posing as the boyfriend of an individual, who had a criminal record and was seeking clearance from the Department of Homeland Security in order to work at LaGuardia Airport in New York. As alleged in the Complaint, March took a number of steps in furtherance of the scheme.

In or around February 2007, March supplied a document, which bore a raised official seal of the “Municipal Courts of New Jersey – Newark Municipal Court” and stated that “the official court record indicates” that a drug charge pending against the individual was dismissed. On March 2, 2007, at a meeting in Manhattan, March accepted \$1,000 in cash from the UC and advised that the individual should “show the letter” as proof to the authorities that the individual was cleared of the crime charged.

In addition, March indicated that his services included making a telephone call to Homeland Security on the individual’s behalf to assist in clearing the security background check. March further allegedly advised that after the individual entered not guilty pleas on other outstanding warrants, March could assist the individual further in clearing those criminal charges. In that regard, March stated that he “checked” on the individual’s warrants at the Clerk’s Office and that the individual need not worry about being arrested before the Court date.

The Complaint further alleges that on March 5, 2007, at a meeting in Newark, March accepted an additional \$2,000 in cash from the UC and explained that he was using his official position to expedite the individual’s security clearance. March allegedly stated that he put the individual “in front of a whole lot of people” and that it can take other individuals “four to five months” to obtain documents clearing them.

The extortion under color of official right charge against March carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The case will next be presented to a grand jury for potential indictment.

Despite being charged in a criminal Complaint, all defendants are presumed innocent unless and

until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Christie credited Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Newark Division, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Pedro Ruiz, and investigators from the Newark Police Department's Office of Professional Standards, under the direction of Police Chief Anthony Campos.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian R. Howe of the U.S. Attorney's Special Prosecution's Unit in Newark.

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