

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 11, 2006

Bayonne Architect Indicted for Allegedly
Extorting \$100,000 from Housing Contractor

(More)

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NEWARK – A Fair Haven man surrendered today and appeared in federal court on an indictment charging him with extortion and filing a false tax return, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Avelino Sambade, 49, of Fair Haven, an architect with an office in Bayonne, is accused of accepting \$100,000 in cash kickbacks from a Bayonne contractor responsible for construction of the \$13.1 million Thomas W. Zito housing complex in Bayonne. According to the Indictment, Sambade accepted the kickbacks between August 2003 and August 2006.

The two-count Indictment was returned yesterday. He turned himself in today to the U.S. Marshal's Service in Newark and appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Claire C. Checci, who set bail \$100,000 secured by his Fair Haven home.

As the architect on the Zito housing complex, Sambade had the contractual ability to authorize payments to the contractor, which was not identified by name in the Indictment. With Sambade's authorization, payments were made to the contractor by the South Shore Village Lease Housing Corp., the entity that commissioned the building of the Zito housing complex. The Indictment alleges that Sambade demanded \$300,000 in cash payments from the contractor to make the project run "smoothly."

The Indictment charges Sambade with one count of extortion, which carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and one count of filing a false tax return, which carries a maximum penalty of three years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Several conversations were recorded by the contractor. Sambade allegedly took a \$25,000 cash kickback from the contractor on March 4, 2004; \$20,000 from the contractor on June 21, 2004; \$20,000 from the contractor on August 2, 2004; \$20,000 from the contractor on September 30 and \$15,000 from the contractor on October 20, 2004.

Despite indictment, all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Leslie G. Wiser, Jr.; and Special Agents of the IRS Criminal Investigation Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Patricia J. Haynes, with the investigation leading to today's indictment.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Constable, III, of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Counsel: Raymond Flood, Esq. Hackensack