



Department of Justice

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Northern District of New York

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PRESS RELEASE

Binghamton, New York — Former Johnson City Police Officer Matthew C. Romano, 34, was sentenced today to forty-eight months in prison by United States Senior District Judge Thomas J. McAvoy for engaging in a scheme to fraudulently obtain salary and benefits from the Village of Johnson City, the Public Employees Risk Management Association, Inc. (PERMA), and the New York State and Local Retirement System, announced United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian and Special Agent-in-Charge Clifford C. Holly of the Albany Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Romano's conviction stems from his false claim that he was assaulted and injured by two black males while working as a police officer in the Village of Johnson City on December 30, 2006.

"This case highlights the commitment by the Department of Justice to thoroughly investigate and prosecute criminal conduct of this nature by those who are sworn to uphold the law," said United States Attorney Hartunian. "Equal justice for all is the foundation of our legal system and a pillar of our democracy. We are proud to work with the many law enforcement officers dedicated to the pursuit of equal justice under the law. Holding an individual accountable for his crimes, regardless of his position, demonstrates that the criminal conduct of one cannot fairly be allowed to diminish the heroism and integrity displayed by law enforcement officers every day," Hartunian added.

Romano was also ordered to pay \$91,234.39 in restitution to the Village of Johnson City and PERMA, and a \$1700 special assessment. Judge McAvoy directed Romano to report to the Bureau of Prisons on April 12, 2011 to begin service of his sentence. On November 4, 2010, Romano's trial culminated in a jury verdict of guilty of all seventeen mail fraud counts charged in the indictment. The indictment alleged that from on or about December 30, 2006, up to the time of the indictment

on September 2, 2009, Romano devised a scheme to fraudulently obtain salary and benefits from the Village of Johnson City, PERMA, and the New York State and Local Retirement System, by falsely claiming that he was assaulted and injured by two unknown black males while working as a police officer in Johnson City on December 30, 2006. The indictment further alleged that no such assault took place, and that Romano inflicted the injuries upon himself. The mailings set forth in each count of the indictment were made for the purpose of executing Romano's scheme. The final count in the indictment charged Romano with mailing his application for Accidental Disability Retirement to the New York State and Local Retirement System in Albany, New York in May 2009, in an effort to obtain 75% of his salary, tax free, with cost of living increases, for the rest of his life, based upon his claim that he was no longer capable of working as a police officer as a result of the psychological trauma resulting from the (fabricated) incident.

"The United States Attorney's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation began investigating Romano's possible criminal activities associated with the December 30, 2006 incident in the spring of 2007. The federal interest in holding accountable a police officer who fabricated an incident which wasted thousands of hours of police time, falsely implicated others in a serious crime, and attempted to obtain a lifetime retirement benefit of up to \$2,000,000, warranted our pursuit of a jury verdict in this case. We commend all law enforcement agencies involved in this matter for the thorough and professional investigation that was conducted," said U.S. Attorney Hartunian.

The case was investigated by both local and federal law enforcement, with the Johnson City Police Department being the lead local agency, and the FBI leading the federal investigation. Invaluable assistance was provided by the New York State Police, Binghamton Police Bureau, Broome County Sheriff's Office, Endicott Police Department, Vestal Police Department, and the New York State Insurance Department Frauds Bureau.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin P. Dooley of the Binghamton Office. Additional inquiries can be directed to AUSA Dooley at (607) 773-2887.

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