

# 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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Contact:  
Michael Drewniak, PIO  
973-645-2888

valv0809.rel  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Aug. 9, 2007

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Linden Building Inspector Charged with  
Extorting Cash Payments from Contractor

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(More)

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Public Affairs Office  
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

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NEWARK – A Linden building inspector has been charged with extorting cash payments from a contracting company employee who was cooperating with the FBI, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Matthew P. Valvano, 49, of Linden, allegedly demanded and accepted three cash payments: one for \$4,500 on March 29; a second for \$2,500 on May 10, and the third for \$3,500 on Aug. 1, according to the criminal Complaint filed yesterday and unsealed today.

Valvano turned himself in to Special Agents of the FBI earlier today. He made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Claire Cecchi, who set bail at \$150,000 personal recognizance bond.

The criminal Complaint charges Valvano with one count of extortion under color of official right, which carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The Complaint alleges that Valvano told an employee of a contracting company seeking to renovate a commercial building in Linden that he would have to pay Valvano to receive favorable inspections and expedited permits.

During a March 14 meeting at the Linden Building Department Permit Office, Valvano allegedly told the contractor employee that if “you wash my hands, I’ll wash yours.” Later the same day, at a construction site, Valvano told the cooperating witness he would have to pay between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to receive favorable treatment on permits and inspections.

The three extortionate payments demanded by Valvano followed. Immediately following the third payment of \$3,500, Valvano was approached by Special Agents of the FBI. According to the Complaint, Valvano admitted that he had demanded and accepted numerous cash payments from the cooperating witness and others in exchange for agreeing to exercise his decision-making authority in favor of those individuals.

A criminal Complaint is merely an accusation. All defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark, with the investigation leading to the charges against Valvano.

The case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey S. Chiesa of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Counsel: Joseph Hayden, Esq. and Michael D’Alessio, Esq., Roseland

