

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : Criminal No. 14-  
 :  
 v. : 18 U.S.C. § 1343  
 :  
 AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA :

**INFORMATION**

The defendant having waived in open court prosecution by Indictment, the United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey charges:

**Individuals and Entities**

At all times relevant to this Information:

1. Defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA was an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of New Jersey. Defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA was a shareholder at a law firm with offices in several states, including in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Haddonfield, New Jersey (“the firm”).
2. Defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA worked at the firm in their Haddonfield, New Jersey office and specialized in the practice areas of toxic tort litigation, workers’ compensation and immigration law. In connection with his toxic tort practice, defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA represented numerous clients of the firm in asbestos litigation in both New Jersey and New York.

**Scheme and Artifice to Defraud**

3. From in or about 2008 through on or about April 9, 2012, in Camden County, in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere, the defendant,

AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA,

did knowingly and willfully devise and intend to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain money and property by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations and promises, as described below.

4. Beginning in or about 2008, defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA began altering complaints filed in asbestos cases in New York State by fraudulently inserting the names of the firm's asbestos clients into legitimately filed complaints.
5. As part of his scheme and artifice to defraud the firm and its clients, defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA obtained copies of legitimate asbestos complaints filed in New York State Courts. Defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA then fraudulently edited those legitimate complaints by deleting a named defendant and replacing that defendant's name with the name of one or more of the firm's asbestos clients. Defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA then forwarded the fraudulently altered complaints to the firm's clients, their representatives and/or their insurance companies.
6. With the assistance of other attorneys and staff from the firm who were unaware of defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA's fraudulent scheme, defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA then undertook the representation of the firm's clients in the fraudulent litigation, including by attending depositions and having other firm attorneys attend depositions, answering discovery in the lawsuits, and settling such lawsuits.

7. All the while, defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUE billed the firm's clients for the cost of the defense.
8. During the course of the scheme and artifice to defraud, defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA inserted the firm's clients into more than 100 lawsuits resulting in more than \$1 million in fraudulent fees, costs and settlements.
9. In furtherance of his scheme and artifice to defraud, defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA used and caused others to use interstate wires to conduct internet research, make telephone calls, send and receive correspondence including fraudulent bills to the firm's clients by facsimile and email, and facilitate wire transfers of funds.
10. Defendant AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA profited from the scheme and artifice to defraud by increased billings credited to him, which resulted in additional compensation and bonuses, and also enhanced his reputation within the firm.
11. On or about December 3, 2009, in Camden County, in the District of New Jersey, and elsewhere, the defendant,

AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA,

having devised and intended to devise the above-described scheme and artifice to defraud, and to obtain money and property by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, for the purpose of executing such scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain money and property, did knowingly transmit and caused to be transmitted by means of wire communication in interstate commerce, writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds, namely, an email from New Jersey to a client in Connecticut and Missouri forwarding a complaint and summons in an asbestos case filed in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of

New York, which complaint AROBERT C. TONAGBANUA had fraudulent altered by deleting the name of an actual defendant and inserting in its place the name of one of the firm's clients.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.



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PAUL J. FISHMAN  
United States Attorney

CASE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

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**INFORMATION**

18 U.S.C. § 1343

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**PAUL J. FISHMAN**  
U.S. Attorney  
Newark, New Jersey

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DIANA VONDRA CARRIG  
Assistant U.S. Attorney  
856-757-5026

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