



The City of New York
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Release #117-2009
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2009

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**DOI STATEMENT ON THREE-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE OF MAN CONVICTED OF
BRIBERY IN ATTEMPT TO ILLEGALLY DISMISS ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL BOARD VIOLATIONS**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement regarding the sentencing of CELESTINO ORTA, 40, to three years in prison and three years supervised release on a federal charge of Bribery Concerning Programs Receiving Federal Funds. ORTA was sentenced on Friday, November 13, 2009, by U.S. District Judge Jack B. Weinstein in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn. In August 2009, a Brooklyn federal jury convicted ORTA. The office of Benton J. Campbell, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, prosecuted the case.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "The defendant struck out when he thought offering free Yankee tickets to a City employee would get him around City rules. This sentencing is a warning that attempting to bribe a City employee is a crime that may well end in a prison term. We are glad the Administrative Law Judge's prompt report of the defendant's proposition allowed DOI investigators to expose the defendant's criminal scheme."

DOI worked with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York on this matter. An undercover investigation began in the summer of 2007 after DOI was notified by an administrative law judge with the City's Environmental Control Board ("ECB") that an individual appearing before the judge offered the judge Yankee tickets in exchange for resolving ECB summonses on a Brooklyn building.

The investigation found that ORTA engaged in a scheme in which he acted as a middle man between a company with ECB fines of approximately \$49,000 and a supposedly corrupt ECB clerk who would falsify ECB's records to indicate that those fines had been cleared. In fact, both the company's "representative" and the "ECB clerk" were DOI undercover investigators. ORTA brokered a deal where the company's "representative" paid ORTA \$15,000 once ORTA proved that the company's ECB fines were cleared. ORTA then split that money with the "ECB clerk." The New York City Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") and the ECB cooperated and assisted in the undercover investigation.

The ECB is an administrative tribunal that hears cases involving violations of New York City's quality-of-life laws. At the time of the investigation, ECB's operations were under DEP. In 2008, ECB was consolidated under the City's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Benton J. Campbell, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Joseph M. Demarest Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge of the FBI's New York Field Division; and Steven W. Lawitts, Acting Commissioner for DEP, and their staffs for their joint work on this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DEP, including Confidential Investigators Zeola Fox and Max Adler, under the direction of Assistant Commissioner Michael Carroll and Deputy Inspector General Michael Healy.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Marisa Seifan and Charles Kleinberg of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York.