



***United States Attorney  
District of New Jersey***

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**UNION CITY, NEW JERSEY-BASED REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER PLEADS GUILTY  
TO MONEY LAUNDERING AND CORRUPTION CHARGES**

NEWARK, N.J. – Moshe “Michael” Altman, a Union City, New Jersey-based real estate developer, pleaded guilty today to offenses related to his arranging a \$20,000 cash bribe to a Jersey City public official and laundering money he thought was criminally obtained, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Altman, 40, of Monsey, N.Y., pleaded guilty to two counts of an Indictment charging conspiracy to obstruct commerce by extortion under color of official right (Count One) and conspiracy to launder money (Count Four). He entered his guilty plea before United States District Judge Jose L. Linares in Newark federal court.

The extortion charge arises from a \$20,000 bribe that Altman arranged for an individual who was working as a confidential witness for the government (the “CW”) to pay John Guarini, 61, of Bayonne, N.J., who served as a Jersey City Housing Department property improvement field representative. The money laundering charge arises from a scheme in which Altman, 40, along with co-conspirators, used purported charitable, non-profit entities to “wash” approximately \$668,000 in dirty checks for the CW.

U.S. Attorney Fishman stated: “Whether arranging a bribe or cleaning cash, Altman was willing to get his hands dirty for his own gain. Today’s guilty plea is another success in our ongoing fight against pay-to-play deals in New Jersey. Anyone willing to play a part in government corruption at any level should have no part at all.”

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in Newark federal court:

In July 2007, Altman arranged for the CW to pay a bribe to Guarini so that Guarini would ensure official approvals on properties the CW purportedly was planning to develop in Jersey City. Altman admitted that he arranged to meet the CW and Guarini at a building in Jersey City, where Altman led the CW to a boiler room so that Guarini could take a \$20,000 bribe from the CW.

Altman also met with the CW in March 2007 and was told that the CW had money to hide from a bankruptcy proceeding. In later meetings, Altman was told that the CW had money from fraudulent bank deals and a counterfeit handbag business. Altman admitted that in order to help the CW disguise the nature, source, ownership and control of the money, he engaged in approximately 15 transactions between May 2007 and July 2009 in which he accepted checks

from the CW and returned cash, less a fee that Altman charged for laundering the money. Altman instructed the CW to write checks to purported charitable organizations such as Gmach Shefa Chaim. He collected approximately \$109,300 in fees over the course of the scheme.

Altman was charged on January 28, 2010, in an Indictment stemming from an undercover FBI political corruption and international money laundering investigation which resulted in charges against 44 individuals via criminal Complaints on July 23, 2009. Altman and Guarini were charged in criminal Complaints and arrested that day.

Shimon Haber, 35, of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Itzhak Friedlander, 43, of Union City, were two of Altman's co-conspirators. Haber and Friedlander also were charged by Complaint in July 2009. On Jan. 14, 2010, Haber pleaded guilty to his role in the conspiracy to launder money, and was sentenced on May 25, 2010, to five months in prison and five months of home confinement by Judge Linares. Friedlander pleaded guilty on April 8, 2010, and awaits sentencing, scheduled for March 8, 2011.

Guarini was indicted on January 12, 2010; his trial is scheduled to commence in March 2011.

The charges to which Altman pleaded guilty each carry a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000. Sentencing is scheduled for March 21, 2011.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, and IRS – Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Victor W. Lessoff, for the investigation of Altman and his co-conspirators. Mr. Fishman also thanked the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin, for their assistance in the investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bradley A. Harsch and Dustin Chao of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

As for Guarini, the charges and allegations contained in the Indictment against him are merely accusations, and he is considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defense counsel: Jacob Laufer, Esq., New York