

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
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Newark, New Jersey 07102

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***Paul J. Fishman, 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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Hanna0303.rel  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Bergen County Man Pleads Guilty in Scheme to Bribe Port Officials

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(More)

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Public Affairs Office

973-645-2888

**Breaking News:** <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/publicaffairs>

NEWARK – A Bergen County man pleaded guilty today to conspiring to pay Customs and

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Border Protection officials more than \$700,000 to traffic counterfeit luxury goods through the Area Port of Newark and other United States ports of entry, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Michael Hanna, also known as “Mike Nova” and “George Flores,” 28, of Little Ferry, pleaded guilty this afternoon before U.S. District Judge Stanley R. Chesler to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery of public officials and to traffic in counterfeit luxury goods.

At the plea hearing, Hanna admitted that he agreed with others to import counterfeit handbags, pocketbooks and sneakers that were intended to imitate the products of such legitimate luxury goods manufacturers as Coach, Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Nike. Hanna further admitted that between June 2008 and March 2009, he paid more than \$700,000 in cash to an undercover law enforcement agent whom Hanna believed was acting at the direction of a corrupt U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”) official. Hanna made the payments in an effort to obtain the purported CBP official’s assistance in ensuring that shipping containers holding Counterfeit Luxury Goods would not be seized at the port and in releasing from CBP’s examination process those shipping containers of Counterfeit Luxury Goods that were being held.

“Port Newark and Elizabeth Marine Terminal are the primary container-ship facilities for goods entering and leaving not just the New York-New Jersey metropolitan region, but also the entire northeastern United States,” U.S. Attorney Fishman said. “We will continue to use all appropriate investigative and prosecutorial tools to ensure that our ports are secure.”

Hanna further admitted that he delivered cash to the undercover officer, including approximately \$20,000 concealed in a Remy Martin cognac gift box, at diners and New Jersey Turnpike rest stops.

The charge of conspiracy to which Hanna pleaded guilty carries a maximum penalty of five years’ imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Judge Chesler scheduled sentencing for June 1, 2010 in Newark. Hanna was originally arrested and charged by complaint on March 18, 2009. On August 4, 2009, a federal grand jury indicted Hanna, charging him with conspiracy, bribery and trafficking in counterfeit goods relating to fifteen shipping containers of Counterfeit Luxury Goods. Hanna has been on pre-trial release secured by a \$200,000 bond since his arrest.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Chesler will consult the Advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant’s criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines and determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Fishman credited Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter Edge in Newark, with the investigation that resulted in Hanna's plea.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Seth B. Kosto of the Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property group, within the Commercial Crimes Unit.

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Defense Attorney: Brian Neary, Esq., Hoboken, for Michael Hanna