

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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sant0125.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 25, 2010

Bloomfield Man Admits to Stealing over \$1.3 Million From Local Interstate Trucking Company

(More)

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NEWARK – A former employee of a Hudson County based interstate trucking company pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to commit mail fraud in connection with his scheme to defraud the business of over \$1.3 million, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

John Santini, 62, currently residing in Casselberry, Fla., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden to a one-count Information that charges him with conspiracy to commit mail fraud. Judge Hayden continued the defendant's release on a \$250,000 bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for May 17.

At his plea hearing, Santini admitted that from March 1999 through August 2005, while employed by J.F. Lomma, Inc. in Kearny, he conspired with others to submit fictitious vendor invoices to his employer. As a result, Santini obtained hundreds of checks from J.F. Lomma, which totaled more than \$1.3 million, and cashed most of those checks at a check-cashing business located in Newark, he admitted.

In pleading guilty to an Information, a defendant waives the right to have his or her case presented to a grand jury and, instead, pleads guilty to charges presented by the government.

Santini faces a maximum statutory penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Hayden 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 in 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 the Postal Inspectors of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector in Charge David L. Collins, and Special Agents with the FBI, under the direction of Kevin B. Cruise, with the investigation.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna Gallucio of the Commercial Crimes Unit in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Lorraine Gaudi-Rufo, Esq., Federal Public Defender's Office