



Department of Justice

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TWO CONNECTICUT MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO BRIBERY SCHEME INVOLVING FBI AGENT IN NEW YORK

WASHINGTON – Two Connecticut men pleaded guilty today to bribery charges, admitting that they participated in a scheme to obtain confidential, internal law enforcement documents and information from a former FBI Special Agent in White Plains, New York.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara of the Southern District of New York, and Justice Department Inspector General Michael D. Horowitz made the announcement.

Johannes Thaler, 51, of Fairfield County, Connecticut, and Rizve Ahmed, aka “Caesar,” 35, of Danbury, Connecticut, pleaded guilty today in White Plains, New York, federal court to bribery and conspiracy to commit honest services and wire fraud before U.S. District Judge Vincent L. Briccetti of the Southern District of New York. Both Thaler and Ahmed admitted to participating in a bribery scheme with Robert Lustik, a former FBI Special Agent in White Plains who worked on the counterintelligence squad.

In pleading guilty, Thaler and Ahmed admitted that between September 2011 and March 2012, Thaler and Lustik solicited bribes from Ahmed, in exchange for Lustik’s agreement to provide internal, confidential documents and other confidential information to which Lustik had access by virtue of his position as an FBI Special Agent. Thaler was Lustik’s friend, and Ahmed, a native of Bangladesh, was an acquaintance of Thaler. Ahmed sought confidential law enforcement information, including a Suspicious Activity Report, pertaining to a Bangladeshi political figure who was affiliated with a political party opposing Ahmed’s views. Thaler and Ahmed admitted that Ahmed requested the confidential information to help Ahmed locate and harm his intended victim and others associated with the victim. Ahmed also sought assistance in having criminal charges against a different Bangladeshi political figure dismissed.

Thaler and Ahmed admitted that they exchanged various text messages in furtherance of the scheme, including text messages about a “contract” that would require Ahmed to pay a \$40,000 “retainer” and \$30,000 “monthly.” In return, Lustik and Thaler agreed to “give [Ahmed] everything [they] ha[d] plus set up [the victim] and get the inside from the party.”

Thaler and Lustik also exchanged text messages about how to pressure Ahmed to pay them additional money in exchange for confidential information. For example, in text messages, Lustik told Thaler, “we need to push [Ahmed] for this meeting and get that 40 gs quick . . . I will talk us into getting the cash . . . I will work my magic . . . We r sooooooo close.” Thaler

responded, “I know. It’s all right there in front of us. Pretty soon we’ll be having lunch in our oceanfront restaurant . . .”

Additionally, in late January 2012, Lustyik learned that Ahmed was considering using a different source to obtain confidential information. As a result, Lustyik sent a text message to Thaler stating, “I want to kill [Ahmed] . . . I hung my ass out the window n we got nothing? . . . Tell [Ahmed], I’ve got [the victim’s] number and I’m pissed. . . . I will put a wire on n get [Ahmed and his associates] to admit they want [a Bangladeshi political figure] offed n we sell it to the victim].” Lustyik further stated, “So bottom line. I need ten gs asap. We gotta squeeze C.”

Sentencing hearings for Thaler and Ahmed are scheduled for Jan. 23, 2015.

Lustyik is scheduled for trial on Nov. 17, 2014. The charges contained in an indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This case was investigated by the Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General and is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Emily Rae Woods of the Justice Department’s Public Integrity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Benjamin Allee of the White Plains Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York.

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