



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David R. Dugas
Middle District of Louisiana

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CONTACT: DAVID R. DUGAS
(225) 389-0443
FAX: (225) 389-0561

BILLS OF INFORMATION AND GUILTY PLEAS IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON CHARGES OF USING INTERSTATE FACILITIES IN AID OF BRIBERY

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today that FLITCHER R. BELL, age 43, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; DARRELL JOHNSON, age 48, of Bueche, Louisiana; and LEONARD P. JACKSON, age 45, of Prairieville, Louisiana, were charged in Bills of Information alleging that each accepted bribes in exchange for “fixing” criminal matters filed and pending in Baton Rouge City Court. JOHNSON and BELL were arraigned today before U. S. District Court Judge James Brady and pled guilty to the charges contained in the Bills of Information filed against them. JACKSON is scheduled for arraignment on Wednesday, November 4, 2009, before Judge Brady.

Count One of the Bill of Information filed against FLITCHER R. BELL charges that from about 2006 through October of 2009, while serving as a senior prosecutor with the Baton Rouge City Prosecutor’s Office, BELL conspired with others to engage in bribery by soliciting and accepting payments from individuals with criminal and traffic matters pending in Baton Rouge City Court with the promise that the charges would be dismissed or otherwise “fixed.” Count Two charges that BELL received cash in exchange for dismissing a criminal charge against an undercover FBI agent. BELL faces a maximum sentence of five (5) years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 on each count.

The Bill of Information filed against DARRELL JOHNSON charges that in the spring of 2009, while serving as a law enforcement officer with the Baton Rouge City Police Department, JOHNSON accepted a cash payment in exchange for causing the dismissal of prostitution charges filed against an individual. JOHNSON faces a maximum sentence of five (5) years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Count One of the Bill of Information filed against LEONARD P. JACKSON charges that from about 2006 until October of 2009 JACKSON, while serving as a law enforcement officer with the Baton Rouge City Police Department, conspired with others to engage in bribery by soliciting and accepting payments from individuals with criminal and traffic matters pending in Baton Rouge City Court with the promise that the charges would be dismissed or otherwise “fixed.” Count Two charges that on September 17, 2009, JACKSON accepted a cash bribe payment in exchange for using his position as a police officer to collect a \$10,000 gambling debt on behalf of an individual. If convicted, JACKSON faces a maximum sentence of five (5) years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 on each count.

The charges resulted from Operation “Illegal Motion,” an ongoing investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Attorney’s Office with the cooperation of the Louisiana Office of Inspector General; the Louisiana State Police; the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigative Division; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General; and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality – Criminal Investigations Division. The cases are being prosecuted by Deputy Criminal Chief Corey R. Amundson and Assistant United States Attorney M. Patricia Jones.

After the guilty pleas by BELL and JOHNSON, U. S. Attorney David R. Dugas stated, “Public corruption at any level of government is unacceptable, but corruption of the criminal justice system threatens our most precious heritage, equal treatment under the law for all citizens. If those with access to corrupt police officers or prosecutors can obtain privileged treatment in exchange for cash bribes or other consideration, then the most important underpinnings of our legal system are threatened.”

Howard Schwartz, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the New Orleans Division of the FBI, stated, “New Orleans usually gets all the attention relating to public corruption. As these guilty pleas today clearly demonstrate, public corruption is by no means limited to the city of New Orleans. The FBI, along with our Federal, State, and Local partners, each represented here today, are focusing our attention on public corruption matters in the Baton Rouge area. I’ll also take this occasion to announce the formation of our Public Corruption Working Group, which will aggressively pursue corruption at all levels. This Group is comprised of the FBI, the United States Attorney’s Office, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, Louisiana State Inspector General, Internal Revenue Service, and the Louisiana State Police.”

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443.

NOTE: A Bill of Information is a determination by the U.S. Attorney’s Office that there is probable cause to believe that an offense has been committed by the defendant. The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until and unless he is proven guilty at trial.

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