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Parsippany Building Inspector Sentenced for Taking \$5,000 in Bribes

CAMDEN – A Parsippany-Troy Hills housing inspector was sentenced to one month in federal prison and six months of home confinement today for accepting \$5,000 in bribes from a general contractor, who was cooperating in a corruption investigation, in exchange for the inspector's agreement not to inspect or regulate the contractor's work, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas also ordered Thomas Seibel, 59, of Parsippany, to pay \$5,000 in fines.

Seibel pleaded guilty before Judge Irenas on May 19, 2008, to a one-count criminal Information that charged him with use of interstate facilities (the mail and telephone) to distribute and facilitate bribery.

At his plea hearing, Seibel admitted that, beginning in July 2007, he agreed to refrain from exercising his official duties as a Parsippany housing inspector on some of the cooperating witness's contracting projects in exchange for \$5,000 in corrupt payments.

Seibel admitted that, in early August 2007, he received a \$2,500 check from the cooperating witness that was sent from Pennsylvania to New Jersey via U.S. mail. Seibel said he accepted another \$2,500 cash payment in August 2007 that constituted the balance of the \$5,000 payment, during a meeting with the contractor at Seibel's home.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Irenas consulted 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, including acceptance of responsibility. The judge, however, has discretion and is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. In sentencing Seibel, Judge Irenas granted a downward variance from the advisory guidelines range.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all of that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, for the investigation involving Seibel. Christie also credited investigators in the Special Prosecutions Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Gramiccioni of the Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense counsel: Todd M. Finchler, Esq., Parsippany

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