

Press
Release

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**FORMER HIGH RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
CONVICTED OF GRAND LARCENY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Public
Information
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Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson announced today the conviction of Anthony Serra on charges of grand larceny and conflict of interest.

Serra, a former Department of Correction Bureau Chief, pled guilty to one count of Grand larceny in the 3rd degree, a Class D felony offense, and one count of Conflict of Interest, a Class A misdemeanor offense.

Robert T.
Johnson
District
Attorney

The conviction is the culmination of a joint investigation by the Bronx District Attorney's Office and the New York City Department of Investigation.

District Attorney Johnson said: " Our goal in prosecuting this case vigorously was to maintain the integrity of public service. We believe that the efforts of all who were involved in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes, send a clear message that there is a price to pay for any public servant who places personal gain above the public good."

Department of Investigation Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said: "Anthony Serra's job was to enforce the law. Instead, he considered himself above the law. The depth and breadth of his misconduct is an insult the Department of Correction and the many dedicated, hardworking employees there. This case was investigated swiftly and successfully because my investigators worked with vigor and integrity despite difficult, trying circumstances. The Federal, State and City charges belie the suggestion that this case could not and would not be made. I am extremely proud of the work of DOI."

Executive Director Mark Davies of the NYC Conflicts of Interest Board said: "The New York City conflicts of interest law is designed to protect the integrity and efficiency of government operations, and is vital to the good functioning of our government. Public service is a public trust and public servants who violate that trust may be subject to criminal prosecution."

Under terms of the plea agreement, Serra will be sentenced to one year in jail and required to pay restitution to the City of New York. Serra will pay the City a minimum of \$50,000 and could pay as much as \$75,000 in restitution. A check in the amount of \$25,000 was turned over today with the understanding that an additional \$25,000 is to be paid on the date of sentencing. In the event that Serra is unable to make the second \$25,000 payment when he is sentenced, he is to make arrangements with the NYC Department of Finance to pay an additional \$50,000 over the next ten years. The City will collect the money through automatic deductions from Serra's pension benefits.

Acting State Supreme Court Justice Steven Barrett set sentencing for Tuesday, July 19, 2005 in Pt. 60. Serra's one year jail term on the state charges is to be served concurrently with his federal sentence for income tax evasion.

Serra, in pleading guilty to the single count of grand larceny, admitted that while serving as a high ranking official at the City jail on Rikers Island, he used Department of Correction personnel on construction projects at his home in suburban Mahopac, New York in Putnam County. The work was performed at taxpayers' expense by correction officers as well as

civilian employees who were supposed to be on duty at Rikers Island. The work included the remodeling of a bathroom and kitchen, the construction of a basketball court and the installation of stereophonic loud speakers in a ceiling at Serra's home.

Serra, in pleading guilty to the Conflict of Interest charge, admitted that he had improperly used his influence to recruit subordinates ranging from wardens, assistant deputy wardens, captains, correction officers and civilian employees of the Department of Correction, to work as "volunteers" in a poll watching operation on behalf of Governor George Pataki's primary election campaigns to win the Conservative Party and Independence Party nominations for governor.

District Attorney Johnson thanked Commissioner of Investigation Rose Gill Hearn and her staff, DOI Assistant Commissioner Michael Caruso of the Correctional Services Unit, New York City Conflicts of Interest Board Executive Director Mark Davies and his staff, members of the Bronx DA's Investigations Division, Deputy Chief Bronx D.A. Detective Investigator Frank Viggiano, and Senior Bronx D.A. Detective Investigator John Wall, for their hard work on this investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Senior Trial Assistant District Attorney Donald Levin, Assistant District Attorney Samuel Ramer, Assistant District Attorney Amir Toossi, and DOI Deputy Commissioner of Investigations Daniel Brownell who was cross designated as a Bronx Assistant District Attorney.

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