



U.S. Department of Justice

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United States Attorney
Eastern District of New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

**FORMER NEW YORK CITY BUILDING INSPECTOR AND THE OWNER OF A
DEMOLITION COMPANY INDICTED FOR EXTORTION**

A one-count indictment was unsealed today in United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York charging Massimo Dabusco, also known as "Max," and Vito Menadi with conspiracy to commit extortion. The indictment was returned under seal by a federal grand jury sitting in Brooklyn on November 1, 2016, and relates to Dabusco's alleged activities as an Inspector with the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) and his silent partnership with Menadi in A&G Contracting Group Corp. (A&G), a demolition and excavation company. Dabusco resigned from his job as a DOB Inspector in August 2015.

The charges were announced by Robert L. Capers, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), and Mark G. Peters, Commissioner New York City Department of Investigation.

The indictment alleges that Dabusco served as a silent partner to Menadi in A&G in violation of the New York City law. Further, Dabusco used his official position to influence property owners and contractors, over whom Dabusco had regulatory authority, to hire A&G and Menadi to perform excavation and demolition jobs. As part of his efforts to secure business for A&G, Dabusco illegally warned contractors about impending DOB inspections. In exchange for his conduct, Dabusco received a share of A&G's profits.

Additionally, Dabusco allegedly abused his position as a DOB Inspector by threatening punitive action against contractors and property owners in an effort to benefit Menadi and A&G. For instance, Dabusco threatened to use his authority as a DOB Inspector to shut down all of a contractor's existing jobs if the contractor did not pay outstanding fines owed by Menadi and A&G.

"New York City's Building Inspectors are entrusted with a vitally important public safety mission. Today's indictment makes clear that public officials who place personal

gain above this public trust and those who assist those officials in such corrupt practices, will be aggressively prosecuted. Maintaining safe buildings and safeguarding the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers demands no less,” stated United States Attorney.

“Public officials, whether elected, appointed, or employed, have a duty to maintain honest and faithful public service. Using your position to influence the decisions of others, and receiving something of value in return, is a direct violation of the law. As alleged, Dabusco may have tried to build up his business by engaging in corrupt activity, but now he’ll have to answer for his actions,” stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Sweeney.

DOI Commissioner Peters said, “Once again, DOI, along with its law enforcement partners, has found a City building inspector corruptly abusing his power and authority, conspiring with his co-defendant to shakedown property owners by threatening them with DOB violations, and pressuring them to steer business to a preferred contracting company, according to the charges. This investigation demonstrates the importance of coordination between the United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the need for DOI to continue its enforcement efforts in the building and construction industry.”

The defendants are scheduled to be arraigned this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Steven L. Tiscione at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn. The charges in the indictment are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government’s case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Martin Coffey.

The Defendants:

MASSIMO DABUSCO
Age: 54
Yorktown Heights, New York

VITO MENADI
Age: 43
Brooklyn, New York,

E.D.N.Y. Docket No.16 Cr 0559(ILG)