

Department of Justice
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District of New Jersey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Genovese Organized Crime Family Associate Sentenced To 28 Months In Prison For Racketeering Conspiracy

Union Official Extorted Port Workers for Christmastime Tribute Payments

NEWARK, N.J. – A North Jersey man was sentenced today to 28 months in prison for his role in the affairs of the Genovese organized crime family of La Cosa Nostra (the “Genovese family”), including engaging in a pattern of racketeering activity by extorting Christmastime tribute payments from members of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA), New Jersey U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman and Eastern District of New York U.S. Attorney Loretta E. Lynch announced.

Nunzio LaGrasso, 64, of Florham Park, New Jersey, former vice president of ILA Local 1478 and ILA representative – previously pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Claire C. Cecchi in Newark federal court to Count One of the second superseding indictment, charging him with racketeering conspiracy. LaGrasso admitted to predicate acts involving conspiracy to commit extortion and multiple extortions.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Since at least 2005, co-defendant Stephen Depiro, 59, of Kenilworth, New Jersey, has managed the Genovese family’s control over the New Jersey waterfront – including the nearly three-decades-long extortion of port workers in ILA Local 1, ILA Local 1235 and ILA Local 1478. Members of the Genovese family, including Depiro, are charged with conspiring to collect tribute payments from New Jersey port workers at Christmastime each year through their corrupt influence over union officials, including the last three presidents of Local 1235 and vice president of ILA Local 1478.

During their guilty plea proceedings, LaGrasso, Depiro and co-defendant Albert Cernadas, 79, of Union, New Jersey, former president of ILA Local 1235 and former ILA executive vice president, admitted their involvement in the Genovese family, including conspiring to compel tribute payments from ILA union members, who made the payments based on actual and threatened force, violence and fear. LaGrasso and Cernadas admitted to carrying out multiple extortions of dockworkers. The timing of the extortions typically coincided with the receipt by certain ILA members of “Container Royalty Fund” checks, a form of year-end compensation.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Cecchi sentenced LaGrasso to two years of supervised release and fined \$25,000. Cernadas was previously sentenced to probation and DePiro is scheduled to be sentenced April 17, 2015.

U.S. Attorneys Fishman and Lynch credited the FBI in New Jersey, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Richard M. Frankel, and in New York, under the direction of Assistant Director in Charge George Venizelos, as well as the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Cheryl Garcia, with the investigation leading to today's guilty pleas. They also thanked the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor for its cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacquelyn M. Kasulis of the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of New York, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony Mahajan, of the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey.

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Defense counsel: Michael Critchley Sr., Esq., Roseland