



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

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December 17, 2008

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Detroit, Michigan

**FORMER U.S. COAST GUARD OFFICIAL
PLEADS GUILTY TO EXTORTION**

A former U.S. Coast Guard petty officer pleaded guilty to using his position to extort tens of thousands of dollars from the family of an illegal immigrant, Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today.

Mr. Berg was joined in the announcement by Armando Lopez, Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago, Illinois office of the Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General, Rear Admiral Peter V. Neffenger, Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District, Neal Marzloff, Special Agent in Charge, Coast Guard Investigative Service Central Region and Andre G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Benjamin Bostic, age 35, of Macomb Township, Michigan entered the guilty plea in United States District Court in Ann Arbor, Michigan before Judge John Corbett O'Meara.

Information presented to the court at the time of the plea showed that between September of 2006 and April of 2008, while BOSTIC held the rank of First Class Petty Officer with the United States Coast Guard, he offered and agreed to use his position to assist a non-citizen illegal alien to avoid being taken into custody and deported from the United States. In return, BOSTIC demanded and was paid more than \$30,000 from the family of the illegal alien.

Acting U.S. Attorney Berg stated, "The privilege of federal service and the honor of protecting the United States in the U.S. Coast Guard should never be sullied by soliciting bribes, particularly when the purpose of the bribe is to prevent the execution of an officer's lawful duties of enforcing the Nation's immigration laws. I commend the Department of Homeland Security-Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service for their outstanding work on this investigation."

Special Agent in Charge Lopez stated, "The Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General will aggressively investigate individuals who abuse their position in a government office for private gain. Public corruption is our top priority."

Rear Admiral Peter V. Neffenger, Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District stated "Mr. Bostic's actions were contrary to the Coast Guard's core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty. Our core values are deeply rooted in our service's heritage and guide our performance, conduct and decision making every minute of every day. The Coast Guard is disappointed that Mr. Bostic chose to violate the public trust rather than embrace our core values and serve the public."

Under the terms of the plea agreement, BOSTIC faces 36 months in prison, the maximum term provided under the law, as well as a fine of up to \$100,000.

A sentencing hearing was set by Judge O'Meara for April 14, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.