

Department of Justice

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U.S. Army Sergeant and Associate Indicted for Alleged Bribe Scheme Involving Contracts at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait

WASHINGTON – An 11-count indictment unsealed today in federal court in Wheeling, W.V., charges an Army sergeant first class and his associate for their alleged roles in a bribery and money laundering scheme at Camp Arifjan, a U.S. military base in Kuwait, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney William J. Ihlenfeld II for the Northern District of West Virginia.

The indictment, returned by a federal grand jury in the Northern District of West Virginia on June 8, 2011, charges Sergeant First Class Richard Evick, 41, of Parsons, W.V., with receiving more than \$170,000 in bribes from two firms that had contracts with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in Kuwait. The indictment also charges Evick and his associate, Crystal Martin, 48, of Pontiac, Mich., with laundering the bribe money through bank accounts in Kuwait and the United States. Evick and Martin were arrested today by special agents from the Army Criminal Investigation Division (Army CID), Defense Criminal Investigation Service (DCIS) and the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR). Martin made her initial appearance today in Detroit before U.S. Magistrate Judge Mona K. Majzoub of the Eastern District of Michigan. Evick is expected to make his initial appearance tomorrow in Raleigh, N.C., before U.S. Magistrate Judge James E. Gates of the Eastern District of North Carolina.

The indictment alleges that Evick, a senior procurement non-commissioned officer who served at Camp Arifjan from February 2005 to December 2006, along with former Majors James Momon and Christopher Murray, awarded Army contracting business and improperly disclosed contracting information to two firms that were seeking contracts from the U.S. military. According to the indictment, as a result of the actions taken by Evick, Momon and Murray, these firms received nearly \$25 million from contracts to deliver bottled water and other commodities to U.S. military bases in Iraq and Kuwait, as well as to paint and clean DoD facilities in Kuwait. In exchange, Evick, Momon and Murray allegedly received cash, airplane tickets, hotel accommodations, and the ability to conceal large amounts of cash in a hidden safe located in the villa of Wajdi Rezik Birjas, a DoD contract employee who worked in the host nation affairs office at Camp Arifjan.

The indictment also alleges that Evick entrusted his bribe money to Martin, a former Army master sergeant, who from October 2005 to December 2008, operated a concession to sell clothing and other items at various U.S. military bases in Kuwait and maintained bank accounts in Kuwait and the United States. The indictment alleges that Martin arranged to transfer the bribe money from Kuwait to the United States and into the possession of Evick, his wife and his girlfriend. Additionally, the indictment alleges that Evick and Martin assisted Momon's efforts to retrieve between \$200,000 and \$250,000 of Momon's bribe money from Birjas and to transfer that money from Kuwait to the United States.

Evick is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit bribery, two substantive bribery counts, one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering, six substantive money laundering counts and one count of obstructing an agency proceeding. If convicted, he faces up to five years in prison on the bribery conspiracy charge, 15 years in prison for each of the bribery counts, 20 years in prison for the money laundering conspiracy count and each of the substantive money laundering counts and five years in prison on the obstruction charge.

Martin is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit bribery and four substantive money laundering counts. She faces up to 20 years in prison for the money laundering conspiracy count and each of the substantive money laundering counts. Evick and Martin also face fines and a term of supervised release, if convicted. The indictment also seeks the forfeiture of any property or money involved in the alleged offenses.

Momon, Murray and Birjas have pleaded guilty to crimes relating to their activities at Camp Arifjan and are awaiting sentencing.

As a result of this investigation, 17 individuals have pleaded guilty or been found guilty at trial for their roles in the corruption at Camp Arifjan, and four others, including Evick and Martin, are awaiting trial.

An indictment is merely an accusation and defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at trial beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Peter C. Sprung and Timothy J. Kelly of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert McWilliams of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of West Virginia. The ongoing investigation is being handled by the Army Criminal Investigation Division, Defense Criminal Investigation Service, FBI and the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

11-809 Criminal Division