



U. S. Department of Justice

*George E. B. Holding*

*United States Attorney*

*Eastern District of North Carolina*

---

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**MONDAY - October 18, 2010**

### **MARINE MAJOR PLEADS GUILTY TO RECEIVING ILLEGAL GRATUITIES**

**RALEIGH** - United States Attorney George E.B. Holding announced that in federal court today **RICHARD JOSEPH HARRINGTON**, 38, pled guilty before United States District Judge James C. Dever III, to demanding, seeking, and receiving gratuities, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(c)(1)(B).

A Criminal Information was filed on September 3, 2010.

According to statements made in Court, from January, 2005, through December, 2005, **HARRINGTON**, a Major in the United States Marine Corps, was deployed to Camp Fallujah, Iraq, where he served as a contracting officer representative. In that capacity, he acted as the liaison between contractors and the contracting office - inspecting and accepting productions and monitoring their performance to ensure compliance with the contracts.

In April, 2009, an investigation was initiated, during which law enforcement determined that **HARRINGTON** had wrongfully solicited and accepted gratuities from a contractor while performing his duties as the contracting officer representative on a \$2.2 million gym equipment contract with Al Jazaer Group. Three-fourths of the way through the contract, in November, 2005, **HARRINGTON** traveled to

Dubai, UAE on official government orders for the purpose of conducting market research involving the procurement of non-tactical vehicles of the U.S. Marine Corps. Before leaving for the trip, **HARRINGTON** told the principal point of contact/corporate representative for Al Jazaer that he wanted to get two Rolex watches. The corporate representative secured the watches and arranged for a third party to give them to **HARRINGTON** while in Dubai.

During the trip, **HARRINGTON** was unofficially accompanied by a representative of AVA International Corporation who paid for the majority of **HARRINGTON's** official expenses to include his flight, hotel, and transportation. The representative also purchased a Persian rug for **HARRINGTON**. **HARRINGTON** subsequently filed a travel reimbursement request claiming \$10,225.81 in expenses and received full reimbursement from the U.S. government.

In late November, 2005, **HARRINGTON** received a Rolex watch valued at \$7,000 from the representative of another corporation interested in future contracts involving non-tactical vehicles. **HARRINGTON** also asked the Al Jazaer Group representative for another Rolex watch and \$35,000 in cash. The representative agreed to get him both.

On November 30, 2005, Al Jazaer Group submitted an invoice for the remaining 25% of the contract. **HARRINGTON** signed off on the requisite documents. Shortly after Al Jazaer Group received payment, the representative gave \$30,000 to **HARRINGTON**. When

**HARRINGTON** asked about the other \$5,000, the representative later gave him an additional \$5,000, along with the previously requested Rolex watch.

In December, 2005, **HARRINGTON** shipped the \$35,000 in a trunk to his residence in Jacksonville, North Carolina, and brought the watches home with him. He did not declare either the currency or the watches on the customs forms.

**HARRINGTON** later used the gifts of cash to purchase a car, pay off another car loan and buy another Rolex watch upon his return to North Carolina.

In or about April, 2006, **HARRINGTON** e-mailed the Al Jazaer Group representative and asked for the Persian silk rug to be mailed to his father in Florida. In November, 2006, he asked the representative to send him an Omega watch valued at \$5,900. The representative complied with both requests.

After **HARRINGTON** returned from his deployment, the contractor asked for **HARRINGTON'S** assistance in getting 30 shipping containers, valued at \$90,000, returned to his company, which were being held by the U.S. Marine Corps. **HARRINGTON** contacted officials at Camp Fallujah to intervene in the dispute over the ownership of the containers and helped Al Jazear get them.

Mr. Holding commented, ***"It is disheartening to see an officer in our armed forces corrupt his position of trust to personally profit from ill-gotten gains. It is unfair to the overwhelming***

*majority of our military members who serve honorably and selflessly. Procurement fraud will be prosecuted vigorously and our office thanks the agents of DCIS, NCIS and the Special Inspector General's office who conduct these investigations."*

*"Our troops deployed to Southwest Asia deserve the best support; that a U.S. military officer responsible for procuring supplies intended for our forces, would seek and accept gratuities for doing his job is reprehensible. This plea should serve as a warning to anyone else involved in, or considering, such corrupt activity. The Defense Criminal Investigative Service continues to work diligently and collaboratively with our other Federal and Defense law enforcement partners, to identify such offenders and bring them to justice,"* stated John F. Khin, Special Agent in Charge, Southeast Field Office, Department of Defense Criminal Investigation.

At sentencing, scheduled for January 24, 2011, term of court, **HARRINGTON** faces a maximum penalty of up to two years imprisonment followed by up to one year of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000.

Investigation of this case was conducted by the Department of Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. Assistant United States Attorney Banumathi Rangarajan represented the government.

# # #

News releases are available on the U. S. Attorney's web page at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/nce](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nce) within 48 hours of release.