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officials in exchange for steering city business worth millions of dollars to his company.

**Isaac M. O'Bannon** • Jul. 24, 2023



The former executive vice president of an Atlanta engineering firm was sentenced to five years in prison for paying bribes to two city of Atlanta officials in exchange for steering city business worth millions of dollars to his company, paying bribes to a former DeKalb County, Georgia, official in an attempt to obtain county contracts, and evading over \$1.5 million in taxes.

According to court documents, Lohrasb “Jeff” Jafari, 72, of Alpharetta, Georgia, was

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city's drinking water and wastewater systems and was responsible for an annual budget exceeding \$500 million.

Jafari gave Smith and Macrina cash and other items of value to obtain business with the City of Atlanta. In exchange for those payments, Smith and Macrina conspired with Jafari to ensure that PRAD Group received city business worth millions of dollars, including by agreeing to replace two evaluators on the selection team for the city's Architectural and Engineering contract and re-scoring an evaluation so that the city would award the contract to Jafari's company.

During Smith's tenure as the CPO, the City of Atlanta awarded contracts worth millions of dollars to PRAD Group and joint venture projects of which PRAD Group was a partner. For years, Jafari met privately with Smith on multiple occasions, frequently at local restaurants. During these meetings, Jafari and Smith discussed City of Atlanta procurement projects, bids, and solicitations. Often at the time of these meetings, Jafari was actively seeking additional work and assistance with ongoing city projects. Jafari paid Smith \$1,000 in cash in the bathroom of the restaurant after most of the meetings. In return for these bribe payments, Jafari expected Smith to use his position and power to assist Jafari with contracting and procurement with the City of Atlanta. From at least 2014 to January 2017, Jafari paid Smith more than \$40,000 in cash with the intent to influence Smith in his role as the city's CPO.

In February 2017, Jafari became aware of the federal investigation into his bribe payments to Smith and confronted Smith at Atlanta City Hall. Jafari insisted that Smith lie to the FBI by denying that Smith took bribe money from him.

From at least 2013 through May 2016, Macrina met with Jafari to discuss City of Atlanta procurement projects, bids, and solicitations. Often when they met, Jafari was actively seeking contracts, projects, and work with the City of Atlanta. To obtain

city work, Jafari promised Macrina a lucrative job with PRAD Group and, directly or

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obtain work in DeKalb County. After the meetings, Jafari directed the source to the bathroom of the restaurants where Jafari made cash payments of \$1,000 and \$1,500.

In addition, from 2014 to 2016, Jafari neither filed personal tax returns, nor paid any income taxes to the IRS. During those years, Jafari withdrew large amounts of cash from corporate bank accounts and used money from the PRAD Group's corporate accounts to pay for various personal expenses, including several luxury vehicles. Jafari evaded the payment of at least \$1.5 million in taxes.

Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General Stuart M. Goldberg of the Justice Department's Tax Division, U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan for the Northern District of Georgia, Assistant Director Luis Quesada of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division, and Acting Special Agent in Charge Demetrius Hardeman of the IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) Atlanta Field Office made the announcement.

The FBI Atlanta Field Office and IRS-CI investigated the case.

Trial Attorney Jolee Porter of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section, Trial Attorney Todd Ellinwood of the Justice Department's Tax Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jeffrey W. Davis and Nathan P. Kitchens for the Northern District of Georgia prosecuted the case.

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