

## RUSSO ADMITS WRONGDOING IN COURT



Frank Russo, the star witness for the government, admitted on Wednesday that he made well over \$1.5 million for himself by guiding contracts, selling certain jobs, and also giving away tax reductions on properties. Russo said that while he did accept bribes, it was only with a select few people, people that he trusted. Russo admitted to the jurors that he did steer the contracts for the V.A.S Company in 2002 until 2008, which helped him to generate \$1.3 million in kickbacks for his own pleasure and for other people as well. Russ also accepted over \$200,000 worth of bribes from an assortment of different individuals within the past few years. Russo also told the jurors that he was one of the most powerful politicians located in the Cuyahoga County. Russo believes he was very powerful and that his partnership with Dimora was unbreakable. Russo believes that together, he and Dimora were extremely powerful, known for taking care of things. Russo admitted to accepting at least 10 thousand, possibly more, from Samir Mohammad. The payment made to Russo eventually helped Mohammad to become a chief deputy auditor. Russo also testified that Mohammad did, in fact, pay him \$20,000 during two different occasions, claiming the money was for hiring a specific contractor. Mohammad also bribed Russo with money in return for receiving jobs for specific individuals, which included his girlfriend and his sister in law. Russo admitted to taking at least \$80,000 in kickbacks for a steered contract for Joe O'Malley. Russo used the money on a condominium in the Cleveland area. Russo also accepted \$20,000 after giving a tax reduction to an attorney, Anthony Calabreeze III. He also says that Calabreeze supplied him with at least \$50,000. Russo believed that the \$50,000 was more of a bonus for him. Russo also admitted that even after the FBI began their raids in 2008, he was still accepting bribes from certain people. The last bribe he accepted took place in December of 2008, right before the New Year, in which he accepted a bribe of \$5,000. Russo also said that when he was doing fundraisers for the community, many people would give him envelopes with money inside as a way of trying to get a job. Russo even said that one day he got home and checked his pockets to find an envelope with at least \$2,000 inside. The envelope came from a man who wanted his son to get a county job. When describing the day of the FBI raid in his home, Russo said that he was still sleeping while his partner, Michael, was awake. Michael woke him up and he greeted the FBI. The FBI told Russo they had a search warrant for his home. Russo claimed the search began at around 9 am in the morning and ended by around 3:30 pm.

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