

PRESS RELEASE

Ex-Husband Of ‘Real Housewives Of New Jersey’ Star Convicted Of Violent Crime In Aid Of Racketeering And Obstruction Of Justice

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey

NEWARK, N.J. The ex-husband of one of the stars of the Bravo television show “The Real Housewives of New Jersey,” was convicted today on charges of planning an assault on his ex-wife’s current husband in exchange for a lavish wedding reception, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced.

Thomas Manzo, 59, of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, was convicted after a two and a half week trial before U.S. District Judge Susan D. Wigenton in Newark federal court on one count of committing a violent crime in aid of racketeering activity, one count of conspiracy to commit a violent crime in aid of racketeering resulting in serious bodily injury, and one count of falsifying and concealing documents related to a federal investigation.

“Thomas Manzo hired a soldier in the Lucchese Crime Family to carry out a vicious assault on his ex-wife’s then-boyfriend, causing the victim to suffer significant injuries,” U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger said. “As a unanimous jury found, Manzo committed multiple offenses by providing a free wedding in exchange for the assault and then concealing documents relating to that wedding. He will now face just punishment for his crimes.”

“Manzo now faces a lengthy federal prison sentence because he chose to hire a ‘made man’ to carry out an assault on his ex-wife’s boyfriend,” FBI – Newark Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy said. “He then gave away a free wedding and hid the

documents to cover it up. The facts and circumstances in this case read like something from a bad TV crime drama, but the evidence and testimony presented in court prove it was reality. We truly hope the victims in this investigation are able to move on with their lives and forget about Manzo and his criminal mafia bedfellows.”

According to documents filed in this case and the evidence at trial:

In the spring of 2015, Manzo hired Lucchese Crime Family soldier John Perna to assault his ex-wife’s then-boyfriend in exchange for a free wedding reception for Perna held at an upscale venue Manzo owned. Perna, who is a “made man” in the Lucchese Crime Family with his own crew, worked with his associates to plan and carry out the violent assault, which took place on July 18, 2015. In exchange for committing the assault, Perna held a lavish wedding reception at Manzo’s venue for free. During the investigation of the assault, Manzo concealed and falsified documents related to the Perna wedding in response to a grand jury subpoena.

The violent crime in aid of racketeering activity count carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The conspiracy to commit violent crime in aid of racketeering carries a maximum potential penalty of three years in prison, and the falsifying and concealing records related to a federal investigation charge carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing is scheduled for October 15, 2024.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy in Newark, with the investigation leading to the charges and arrest. He also thanked special agents of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General, officers of the Lyndhurst Police Department, officers of the Totowa Police Department, investigators of the Monmouth County Prosecutors Office, investigators of the New Jersey State Police, and the Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office for their assistance.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kendall Randolph of the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s Organized Crime and Gangs Unit in Newark and Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas S. Kearney of the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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