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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CITY OF CHICAGO BUILDING INSPECTOR CHARGED WITH DEMANDING BRIBE FROM PROPERTY OWNER IN EXCHANGE FOR ALLOWING RENOVATIONS WITHOUT A PERMIT

CHICAGO — A building inspector for the City of Chicago was arrested today for allegedly demanding a \$300 bribe from a property owner in exchange for allowing renovation work without a permit.

ROBERTO URIBE, 55, of Chicago, is charged with attempted extortion for soliciting the bribe from an owner of a two-story building in Chicago, according to a criminal complaint and affidavit filed in U.S. District Court. Unbeknownst to Uribe, the building owner was cooperating with federal authorities and had surreptitiously recorded the bribery demand.

In a recorded conversation on Nov. 9, 2015, Uribe allegedly boasted of his ability to shut down the renovation work unless the owner paid him \$300. “What’s going to happen is, if we put a stop on it, it’s going to stop you for six months, seven months,” Uribe told the building owner, according to the complaint. “So now, what’s happening now is you’re gonna give me some appreciation, and you’re gonna hurry up and get this done. And that appreciation is gonna be \$300. Now how quickly can you get me my money to keep my mouth shut?”

Federal authorities arrested Uribe this morning. He was released on a personal appearance bond after an initial hearing this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Sheila Finnegan in Chicago. A status hearing is scheduled for April 26, 2016, at 1:15 p.m.

The attempted extortion charge is punishable by up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The arrest was announced by Zachary T. Fardon, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Michael J. Anderson, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Joseph M. Ferguson, Inspector General for the City of Chicago.

Uribe is employed as a Building/Construction Inspector for the City of Chicago Department of Buildings, which enforces the permitting and inspection requirements of the Chicago Building Code. According to the complaint, Uribe initially approached workers performing renovations at the building and asked if they had a permit to work on the front window façade. The workers put Uribe in touch with the building owner, who met with Uribe and learned of the bribery solicitation.

Uribe allegedly told the owner that paying a bribe to avoid a permit would save money and benefit both of them. "This here will stop you for six months and it'll cost you starting at \$3,500 for an architect and plans," Uribe told the owner in a recorded conversation, according to the complaint. "I'm looking out for you, we're looking out for each other."

The public is reminded that a complaint is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah Streicker.

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