

Home News Tribune (East Brunswick, NJ)

January 9, 2007

Section: NEWS

Lobbyist pleads guilty to disorderly trespass charge

Author: LONNIE MACK *Home News Tribune*

Dateline: MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Article Text:

By LONNIE MACK

STAFF WRITER

A five-count Middlesex County grand jury indictment charging **Raj Mukherji**, a 22-year-old lobbyist and real-estate developer, with two counts of stalking, witness tampering, burglary and contempt were dismissed by a Superior Court Judge in New Brunswick yesterday after he pleaded guilty to a disorderly persons trespass charge.

The agreement negotiated by Mukherji's attorney Robert Gluck and Assistant Prosecutor Manuel Sameiro includes a civil no contact order to protect the alleged victims and calls for him to be admitted into a one-year pre-trial probationary program. When he successfully completes that program, the disorderly persons trespass charge will also be dismissed, according to the plea agreement.

Sameiro said the agreement was approved by the two alleged victims whose objective was to stop him from having contact with them, not to send him to jail.

"The objective of the prosecution, Middlesex County Prosecutor Bruce Kaplan said, "was to protect the victims. The objective has been achieved and the victims are satisfied.

Mukherji, who was a business partner of former Morris County prosecutor and one-time gubernatorial candidate Michael Murphy when the Middlesex County indictment was handed up in December 2005, is still facing a two-count federal indictment which was handed up in May. He is charged with impersonating an agent of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency and lying about it to an FBI agent.

Lawrence Lustberg, Mukherji's attorney on the federal indictment, said "the indictment was an error, plain and simple."

In Middlesex County he was accused of stalking two women who have been identified only by their initials.

One of the women was a woman Mukherji attended Rutgers University with and the other was a woman he attended high school with in Union County. They accused him of repeatedly following and stalking them between November 2003 and October 2005.

The women said he called them on the telephone and sent uninvited electronic mail and text messages.

He was also accused of attempting to influence one of the women to not testify against him.

He pleaded guilty yesterday to a downgraded burglary charge of disorderly trespass for entering the Fanwood home of John Cameron, the boyfriend of one of his alleged stalking victims, on Oct. 22, 2005 without the owners consent.

In a written statement distributed after the plea, Mukherji said he was "lured there in an inebriated state."

About the agreement, Mukherji said "I am frustrated it took them a year to figure it out, but I commend the prosecutor's office for dismissing the indictment. The stalking and related charges were baseless and could not have been successfully prosecuted."

Mukherji's claims he and his girlfriend were the victims. He said they "were terrorized by a jealous woman scorned who later tried to blackmail him."