A real estate developer and an FBI agent charged with bribing city employee

A Maryland real estate agent and developer and a South Carolina FBI agent are accused of coming together to bribe a city housing employee for access to high-paying real estate deals.

As first reported by a Washington, D.C., news outlet, Brian Bailey, 38, from Silver Spring, Maryland, and FBI Special Agent David Paitsel, 48, from Ashville, North Carolina, have been charged with bribery of a public official on Thursday. The complaint states that they have paid an unspecified sum to a D.C. Department of Housing and Community employee in exchange for receiving Offer of Sale notices through email.

An Offer of Sale is a notice that informs tenants living in a property that it is going to be sold, and they have the right to buy it before it goes on the market. The law, which is part of Washington, D.C.'s Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), gives people who are currently living in the property the chance to buy it first or sell their rights of first refusal to a third party.

According to the charges filed against Bailey and Paitsel, the two men bribed the employee to get access to the tenants' names between May 2017 and January 2018. Bailey would then ask Paitsel to use a special FBI investigation software called CLEAR to look up tenants' contact information and reach out to them in an effort to buy their refusal rights first.

When a tenant agreed to sell his rights and Bailey was able to resell them to investors, the two men shared the profits, according to the complaint, as reported by WTOP, the Washington, D.C. local news outlet.

After the charges were made, Bailey and Paitsel were both released on their own recognizance. Bailey is due to appear in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia is on May 15 while Paitsel is due on May 20.

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