

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 08-184

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August 19, 2013

RELEASE DATE

Joyce E. Dudley

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Gary Gemberling, Deputy District Attorney

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******* PRESS RELEASE *******

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced the conviction of Mario Hernandez Serrano, age 54, on August 15, 2013. Serrano pled no contest to felony diversion of construction funds and felony tax evasion, and misdemeanor counts of contracting without a license and failing to provide workers' compensation insurance.

Serrano was arrested in May of this year after an investigation by the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office, the Contractor's State Licensing Board, and the Franchise Tax Board. The investigation was initiated after several homeowners filed complaints with the Contractor's State Licensing Board when Serrano took money from them and performed sub-standard work on their homes. He then abandoned the jobs without completing the projects or refunding the homeowners' money. The investigation revealed that Serrano spent large sums of money taken from the homeowners at local casinos.

In addition to not having a contractor's license and not providing workers' compensation insurance for the individuals he employed on the projects, Serrano also failed to report \$174,340 in income to the Franchise Tax Board which he earned in 2011.

Deputy District Attorney Gary Gemberling prosecuted the case and stated that, "Many times homeowners do not know what to do when something like this happens to them. They often feel confused and taken advantage of, and are usually left with an unfinished project."

District Attorney Joyce Dudley added, "It is a crime to receive payment to perform construction work and then walk away without completing the project."

If this has happened to you, please contact your local law enforcement agency and/or the Contractor's State Licensing Board. The Contractor's State Licensing Board can be contacted at www.csfb.ca.gov or 1-800-321-CSLB (2752).

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