

Businessmen Plead Guilty to Federal Charges Stemming from Illegal Contributions Made in the Name of Another

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According to an August 3, 2007, Department of Justice press release available [here](#), David Collier and Robert Price III, two South Carolina businessmen, pled guilty on July 31 to one count each of causing a false statement to be made to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Press reports indicate that these charges stemmed from an FBI, rather than an FEC, investigation into election fraud concerning the Catawba tribe in South Carolina and certain business entities connected with the tribe.

Collier and Price, through New River Management and Development, operated the Catawba's bingo hall. In order to garner support for a larger gaming facility, the men solicited family, friends, and business associates to make campaign contributions to federal candidates and elected officials. The contributors were later reimbursed for their contributions with money from the tribe, totaling over \$65,000. Federal law prohibits the reimbursement of campaign contributions. Because the contributions actually came from the Native American tribe rather than the individuals who gave the money to the federal campaigns, those campaigns improperly, though unknowingly, reported contributions from the individuals, rather than from the tribe.

Both men, who are scheduled to be sentenced in November, face up to five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and three years' supervised release.