



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
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*Western District of New York*

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# PRESS RELEASE

October 1, 2004

**RE: LABORERS LOCAL 91- UNITED STATES v. JAMES MCKEOWN**

United States Attorney Michael A. Battle announced today that a second former member of Laborers Local 91 has been convicted for violent activity on a picket line following a guilty plea before the Honorable Richard J. Arcara, United States District Judge.

JAMES MCKEOWN, age 48, of Niagara Falls, New York, admitted in Court to attempting, with other Local 91 members, to destroy a commercial vehicle owned by Alliant Food Service, Inc., and to incapacitate the driver. The incident in question took place on April 17, 1998, during a picket by Local 91 of the Clarion Hotel. While the Hotel at the time was undergoing renovation by non-union contractors, neither Alliant Food Service nor its driver had any connection to the construction project. Nevertheless, when the truck driver had completed a food delivery to the Hotel, Local 91 members surrounded the truck and attacked the driver, ultimately breaking the driver's nose in three places and damaging the truck. The charge of conviction is a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 33(a) and 2, and carries a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000.00, or both.

Assistant U.S. AttorneyS William J. Hochul, Jr. and Brett Harvey handled the case, stated that the charges arose from a lengthy criminal investigation of Laborers International Union of America, Local 91 (hereinafter "Local 91"), based in Niagara Falls, New York. Ten Local 91 members, including the officers of the union, were charged with racketeering which consisted of engaging in a violent scheme to extort jobs, and the wages and benefits associated with those jobs, from union and non-union contractors and employees, at various construction projects in Niagara County, New York, over a six year period of time. Five other Local 91 members were charged with isolated instances of violence. One of the defendants, Brian Perry, pleaded guilty to racketeering in June, 2004. Another defendant, Michael "Butch" Quarcini, died prior to trial. The other defendants are awaiting three separate trials scheduled to begin in November.

United States Attorney Battle declared that this case is an important step towards cleaning up the violence which for too long plagued construction job sites and picket lines in Niagara County. Mr. Battle noted that in this case, the violence was committed on an innocent truck driver that had no connection to the job site dispute, but that this did not deter certain Local 91 members from attacking him.

As part of his guilty plea, Mr. McKeown will now cooperate with the Government and testify as needed at the upcoming trials.

The prosecution of the members of Laborers Local 91 was the culmination of a joint investigation on the part of the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Peter Ahearn, the New

York State Police, under the direction of Major Thomas Askey , the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, under the direction of Sheriff Thomas Beilein, and the Niagara Falls Police Department, under the direction of Superintendent John Chella.

Sentencing is scheduled for April 28, 2005, at 12:30 p.m. in front of United States District Judge Arcara.

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