



## **Maldonado: More tales of corruption in Cuyahoga County government**

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In Cuyahoga County, no streak of weirdness or ineptitude is an accident. While government employees may plead ignorance to mistakes and corruption, odds are good that someone is greasing the wheel.

This brings us to the tale of Adrian Maldonado, the county's longtime director of procurement and diversity. He's in charge of hiring construction companies for projects, as well as certifying the small, minority-owned businesses that are supposed to get a portion of those construction contracts. In other words, he has a lot of power...

Lately, it's become abundantly clear that the county has a habit — just like the City of Cleveland — of hiring minority companies that are known to be fronts. They take a cut of the contract, but don't do any real work. Instead, they kick most of the money back to whitey.

This happened at least twice on the county's HQ project — when the white-owned Precision Environmental had its workers pose as employees of the black-owned Lawrence Harris Construction, and when a supervisor from the white-owned R.P. Carbone Co. was listed as an employee of the black-owned McTech Corp.

Both McTech and Precision have a lengthy history of participating in such scams. In fact, in the Mike White era, the feds busted Precision and Choice Construction (a previous incarnation of McTech) for working together on a front scam at NASA Glenn. Choice went out of business, but most of its employees and contracts simply transferred over to McTech.

Yet last year, when Maldonado learned the same sham was being run on the HQ project, he put on his best shock and awe face. "We're gonna send a message to every contractor. We cannot have those kinds of games that were played elsewhere here," he told Punch. Wonder why?

Well, Maldonado also happens to be a city councilman in Berea. And like any good politician, he has some questionable friends.

Back in September 2003, he accepted a \$250 campaign contribution from Nate Gray, Mike White's buddy and alleged bagman, who's now sitting in federal prison for bribing politicians. When White was mayor of Cleveland, you couldn't get a construction contract without going through Gray. And everyone knew it. Including people in Berea.

So it should come as no surprise that Maldonado's still letting White's favored contractors get millions of dollars in county work. The only question is why no one's tried to stop him. – *Lisa Rab*