

## Master Sergeant was a FOO at Iraq FOB, Now Revealed to be a FOOL

Written by Nick Sanders

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United States Army Master Sergeant Julio Soto, Junior, age 52, of Columbia, Georgia served his country in a tour of duty at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Hammer, located in Iraq. While at FOB Hammer, Master Sergeant Soto performed the duties of a Field Ordering Officer (FOO). The FOO orders “miscellaneous items and supplies such as paint, lumber and plywood from local vendors.” Apparently, a FOO is a “public official” for purposes of applying [Section 201](#) of Title 18 of the United States Code and, accordingly, a FOO is prohibited from accepting gratuities from the suppliers from which s/he is ordering.

We thank Master Sergeant Soto for his service to his country, but we do not appreciate how he served himself while deployed—accepting at least \$62,000 in illegal gratuities from local Iraqi contractors in return for awarding them construction contracts at FOB Hammer—according to [this DOJ press release](#)

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The DOJ press release stated, “Soto and his alleged co-conspirator unlawfully sought, received and accepted illegal gratuities for helping Iraqi contractors gain U.S. government contracts, and then purchased U.S. Postal money orders with the illegal proceeds and mailed them back to the United States.”

Soto pleaded guilty to “one count of conspiracy to accept illegal gratuities.” Which makes it sound like it was only an attempt to solicit bribes—a kind of a frat boy prank, really—and not at all like he committed a *real* crime.

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Which he did, of course. While wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army.