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Newark, NJ

## **22 charged in multi-state scheme to obtain real driver's licenses with fraudulent documents**

NEWARK, N.J. — Twenty-two individuals were charged and arrests were made in six states Wednesday in connection with an alleged scheme to fraudulently obtain driver's licenses for illegal aliens and other ineligible individuals, New Jersey U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

The investigation was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Document and Benefit Task Force; FBI; Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission; and Bergen County Prosecutor's Office.

Seventeen arrests were made in New Jersey, New York, California, Nevada, Virginia and Georgia, including a contract employee of USCIS charged with stealing and providing forms used to aid in the scheme. The charged criminal operation allegedly provided a suite of unlawful services to individuals illegally residing in the United States, including fraudulently obtaining driver's licenses, and investor and student visas.

"Today's arrests are a reflection of how ICE Homeland Security Investigations continues to prioritize and work with our law enforcement partners to identify and dismantle those organizations engaged in document and identity fraud," said Andrew McLees, special agent in charge of HSI Newark. "Fraudulent documents give people the appearance of lawful status and provide them with opportunities to which they are not entitled. This investigation prevented masses of additional fraudulent documents from being used, and possibly threatening security at the local, regional and national levels. HSI works closely with federal, state and local agencies to combat immigration fraud, protect the integrity of the immigration system and punish those who profit from promoting fraudulent schemes."

"By gaining access to protected, blank government immigration forms, the subjects in this case were able to utilize sophisticated computer software to create false identity documents and subsequently move to receive legitimate driver's licenses," said FBI Special Agent in Charge Ward. "In doing so, they were able to circumvent established safeguards and proper vetting put into place post 9/11. The exploitation of this vulnerability is significant because identity-type frauds are a gateway crime. Seldom are they the end game. Individuals with falsely obtained identities are more likely to commit financial frauds, walk away from legal obligations, and are more difficult for law enforcement to identify and investigate."

According to the complaints unsealed today:

Young-Kyu Park, formerly a resident of Fort Lee, N.J., and currently a resident of Los Angeles, was the leader of a criminal enterprise ("the Park Criminal Enterprise") operating in Palisades

Park and Fort Lee, N.J., as well as in other states. The Park Criminal Enterprise illegally obtained driver's licenses genuinely issued by New Jersey, New York, Virginia, Nevada and elsewhere. To do so, it acquired, created and counterfeited a variety of documents for sale to customers. Members of the Park Criminal Enterprise also escorted customers to various state motor vehicle agencies and coached them through obtaining the licenses. In return, customers each paid the Park Criminal Enterprise a fee of approximately \$3,000 to \$4,500 for the unlawful services.

In particular, Young-Kyu Park fraudulently obtained, completed and sold genuine I-797 forms for customers to use to get licenses. An I-797 form is used by the federal government – including USCIS – to communicate with others or convey an immigration benefit. State agencies that issue driver's licenses rely on these forms to verify the authenticity of an applicant's foreign passport and to verify the applicant's lawful presence in the United States. One version of this form can be used to show eligibility for in-state college tuition.

The Park Criminal Enterprise also altered and counterfeited other immigration documents, including passports, and created and provided fictitious documents to customers – such as fictitious utility bills and bank statements used to establish residency requirements. In furtherance of the scheme, Young-Kyu Park and his co-conspirators fraudulently extended expired Korean passports of individuals without legal status in the United States so they could obtain driver's licenses. These illegal services were, at times, advertised in Korean newspapers and online with headings such as, "New Jersey Driver's License."

Young-Kyu Park obtained blank I-797 forms from Karine Michmichian and Martin Trejo, a USCIS contract employee, working at the USCIS' Western Forms Center in Montclair, Calif. – the United States' largest warehouse storage facility for these forms. At various times, Young-Kyu Park ordered the forms from Michmichian, who contacted Trejo.

For example, on Feb. 2, 2012, Young-Kyu Park called a cell phone used by Michmichian. Approximately two minutes later she sent a text message to a cell phone used by Trejo, stating, "Need 200 (A) call me asap, please, valentines is coming," – an alleged reference to the purchase of approximately 200 I-797A forms. Young-Kyu Park then used a computer to print customers' information onto the blank, stolen forms.

The Park Criminal Enterprise maintained a network of co-conspirators in New Jersey, Nevada, Georgia and Virginia that met with customers. Young-Kyu Park often communicated with his co-conspirators in various states through email. For example, on Nov. 3, 2011, Young-Kyu Park sent an email to a cooperating witness, stating, "Not sure if [you] have received [the customer's] passport from Director Kim [Ki-Sok Kim]. Must receive the passport and extend it. When extending passport . . . [sic] set the period to 11/3/2011-11/2/2016 . . . [sic] issue date should be 11/2/2011." In the same email, Young-Kyu Park directed the cooperating witness to then send the altered passport, via Federal Express, to Ho-man Lee, a co-conspirator in Alexandria, Va., who helped customers to illegally get licenses in that state.

Members of the Park Criminal Enterprise, including Young-Kyu Park's wife, Soong-Young Park, and his daughter, Hanna Park, laundered the proceeds of the illegal operation to distribute the proceeds and conceal the scheme. The criminal complaint charges the following offenses:

Count one charges the named defendants with conspiracy to unlawfully produce identification documents (driver's licenses) and false identification documents (passports). The charge carries a maximum potential penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Count two charges the named defendants with conspiracy to steal government property and to transport and receive stolen property in interstate commerce. The charge carries a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Count three charges the named defendants with conspiracy to commit money laundering. The charge carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The charges and allegations contained in the complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1206/120627newark.htm>