

Immigration official guilty in alien fraud

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By Jerry Seper

The former assistant chief in the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services was convicted yesterday by a federal jury in Alexandria on two felony counts of harboring an illegal alien and encouraging and inducing an illegal to reside in the United States.

Lloyd W. Miner, 49, of Centreville, served as the assistant chief of investigations/internal affairs for the Office of Security and Investigations at CIS, an agency within the Department of Homeland Security.

The illegal alien, identified by federal authorities as Tsomorlig Batjargal, also known "Somoun," a native of Mongolia, also was convicted of conspiracy to commit fraud with identification documents.

The case against Miner began last year with the investigation of former Homeland Security supervisor Robert Schofield, who pleaded guilty last year to accepting cash bribes in exchange for creating phony visas, green cards and citizenship documents. Schofield was sentenced to 15 years in prison and ordered to pay the government \$3.1 million.

Miner's attorney, John E. Gullette, has said his client was targeted because his superiors thought he was passing embarrassing information about the agency to advocates of stricter immigration controls.

U.S. Attorney Chuck Rosenberg said Batjargal obtained a driver's license from Washington state when Virginia would not renew her license because she was not a lawful U.S. resident. He said she flew to Washington state in March 2006, acquired the driver's license and then returned to Virginia.

In court documents, prosecutors said Miner paid for the plane ticket.

Testimony during the trial showed that Miner met Batjargal in 2005 and later provided her with a black convertible Volkswagen Beetle with Fraternal Order of Police license plates personalized with her name. Mr. Rosenberg said Miner also permitted Batjargal to reside in his residence for over a year and paid her expenses.

On April 23, when a federal search warrant was executed at Miner's residence in Centreville, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents took custody of Batjargal.

Miner had been a sworn federal law enforcement officer since 1987 when he joined the

now-defunct U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

U.S. District Judge Liam O'Grady scheduled sentencing for both Miner and Batjargal for March 7. Miner faces five years in prison for each count. Batjargal faces a maximum sentence of 15 years. Miner's vehicles and house also are subject to forfeiture at sentencing.