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Newark, NJ

## **Man convicted in New Jersey of immigration fraud extradited to U.S. from India after fleeing to avoid prison**

NEWARK, N.J. – A citizen of India who fled the United States to avoid spending more than three years in prison following a federal immigration fraud conviction was extradited from India on Thursday to face the punishment for his crimes, announced District of New Jersey U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman. The investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) led to the arrest and extradition.

Naranjan Patel, 53, formerly of South Plainfield, N.J., was convicted in June 2007 for helping ineligible aliens fraudulently file for legal residency to remain in the United States. Patel was found guilty following a jury trial of both counts of the indictment against him; one count of conspiring with others to defraud the United States and one count of submitting false immigration documents to immigration officials.

U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden sentenced Patel in October 2007 to 37 months in prison, ordering him to begin serving his sentence as directed by the Bureau of Prisons. Less than a week before his surrender date of Nov. 23, 2007, Patel fled the United States for India.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Between September 2004 and February 2006, Patel conspired with Jonathan Saint Preux and his wife Michele Saint Preux to file fraudulent immigration applications on behalf of hundreds of illegal aliens who were seeking permanent residency status in the United States under a government sponsored amnesty program. The program allowed aliens to eventually seek permanent residency status if they could demonstrate they had illegally resided in the United States continuously between 1982 and 1988.

Patel and his co-conspirators helped aliens who did not meet these requirements file immigration forms which fraudulently represented that they did. The conspirators also coached the applicants on what to say during interviews with immigration officials.

During the conspiracy, co-conspirator Jonathan Saint Preux was an attorney specializing in immigration law, with an office in Irvington, N.J. Patel's primary role in the conspiracy was to recruit alien applicants, but he also helped Jonathan Saint Preux and Michele Saint Preux file fraudulent applications and coach the applicants. The law offices of Jonathan Saint Preux received thousands of dollars in exchange for their services.

Patel will now begin serving the 37-month sentence imposed for those crimes.

Jonathan Saint Preux and Michele Saint Preux pleaded guilty in April 2007 to submitting false immigration documents to immigration officials. Jonathan Saint Preux was subsequently sentenced to 57 months in prison. Michele Saint Preux, who served as her husband's office manager, was sentenced to a five-year term of probation.

The Office of International Affairs in the Justice Department's Criminal Division, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, under the direction of New Jersey District Director John E. Thompson, played key roles in the extradition process.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ronnell L. Wilson of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1207/120705newark.htm>