

NY-Based Attorney Pleads Guilty to Role in Extensive Immigration Fraud Mill

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A Manhattan-based attorney has pled guilty to operating an extensive immigration fraud mill scheme through his law practice, the Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara recently announced.

Earl David admitted that he and his co-conspirators submitted false claims to labor and immigration personnel over a 13-year period concerning tens of thousands of illegal immigrants which they purportedly found employment sponsorships and helped obtain legal status in the United States.

“As he admitted today, for more than a decade, Earl David used his law firm as a front for an immigration fraud mill that deceived authorities and exploited thousands of people who were seeking a legal path to citizenship,” Bharara said.

David’s law firm, which would charge up to \$30,000 per client, would apply for and obtain DOL certifications based on fraudulent claims that the illegal aliens were being sponsored by U.S. employers. In many cases, the sponsor employers were shell companies that did not exist other than to further the illegal immigration scheme. The firm would also use phony documents, including fake pay stubs, tax returns and experience letters, to show the sponsorships were real. David and the firm recruited many individuals to further the scheme, including accountants who agreed to produce fake tax returns for the sponsor companies, a DOL employee who helped ensure certifications were granted and dozens of other individuals who agreed to misrepresent to DOL that they were sponsoring aliens for employment.

As a result of the scheme, DOL issued thousands of certifications, and immigration authorities granted legal status to thousands of illegal aliens who did not meet the legal requirements. David’s firm shut down after federal search warrants were executed at several of the firm’s locations in 2009.

David faces a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison after pleading guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit immigration fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud. David also agreed to forfeit more than \$2.5 million.