

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

Campaign Services Professional Arraigned for Role in Campaign Finance Crimes

***Ravneet Singh Allegedly Facilitated Nearly \$300,000 in Illegal Foreign Contributions
to Campaigns in San Diego***

***As part of conspiracy, Former SDPD Detective Ernesto Encinas Allegedly Sought to Fire the SD
Chief of Police and Pick His Replacement***

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – January 21, 2014

SAN DIEGO, CA - Ravneet Singh, the proprietor of Washington, D.C.-based ElectionMall, Inc., was arraigned today on charges that he conspired to finance political campaigns using money from an illegal foreign source. Singh was arrested by FBI Agents on Friday, January 17, 2014, pursuant to an arrest warrant. According to the complaint, filed by an FBI Special Agent, unsealed by U.S. Magistrate Judge William V. Gallo, Singh conspired with former San Diego Police detective Ernesto Encinas and others to funnel more than \$500,000 of illegal foreign money into San Diego municipal and federal campaigns, primarily in 2012 and 2013. Singh's company, ElectionMall, Inc., was also charged as a defendant.

According to the complaint, Singh, who styled himself the “campaign guru,” was the President, Chief Executive Officer and founder of ElectionMall, Inc., a company that provided social media services and other campaign and election products to political candidates throughout the world. Encinas was the owner of a private security and consulting business in San Diego who oversaw the protection detail of a person identified in the complaint only as “the Foreign National.” Between approximately 2011 and 2013, Singh and Encinas helped the Foreign National donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to a series of candidates for elective office—including during the 2012 San Diego mayoral election, a 2012 Congressional campaign and the 2013 San Diego special mayoral election (up to, but not after, December 2013).

Despite the Foreign National’s willingness to contribute funds, he could not legally donate to any of these campaigns. Under federal law, “foreign nationals” are prohibited from making any contributions or expenditures in connection with any American electoral campaign—whether at the federal, state or local level. Knowing this, Singh and Encinas allegedly used a series of increasingly complex techniques to hide the fact that the Foreign National was the true source of these illicit campaign funds.

According to the complaint, Encinas—among other devices—helped mask the Foreign National’s contributions through the use of shell companies.

Similarly, Singh used his expertise to facilitate the donation of social media services to political candidates that the Foreign National favored. The complaint alleges that these contributions—sometimes classified as “in-kind contributions”—were not reported in any campaign filings and totaled nearly \$300,000.

According to the complaint, the Foreign National’s illegal contributions included:

- A \$100,000 contribution to a SuperPAC
- \$100,000 in unreported compensation for campaign services
- A \$30,000 contribution to a political party committee
- Another \$190,000 in unreported compensation for campaign services
- A \$150,000 contribution to another SuperPAC
- A \$30,000 contribution to another political party committee
- The promise of a “mill” in additional contributions

According to the complaint, Encinas wanted the next mayor to fire the Chief of Police and replace him with a person of Encinas’s choosing in exchange for the Foreign National’s financial help.

Complaints are not evidence that the defendant committed the crime charged. All defendants are presumed innocent until the United States meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

DEFENDANT**Case Number: 14MJ0201**

Ravneet Singh
Age: 41
Washington, D.C.

ElectionMall, Inc.

Ernesto Encinas
Age: 57
San Diego, CA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES AND MAXIMUM PENALTIES

Count 1: Conspiracy to Commit Offenses against the United States – 18 U.S.C. § 371.
Maximum penalties: 5 years in prison, 3 years of supervised release, \$250,000 fine
and a \$100 special assessment

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation
San Diego Police Department