

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Former Fair Lawn Businessman Sentenced to 70 Months
In Prison for Multi-million Credit Card Fraud

(More)

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NEWARK – A former Fair Lawn business owner was sentenced today to 70 months in federal prison for defrauding credit card companies of as much as \$2.5 million through bogus charges at his business and elsewhere, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Dennis M. Cavanaugh also scheduled a hearing for April 16 to decide the amount of restitution Mohamad Abdualraof Abdulaal, a/k/a “Moe Abdulaal,” 37, may be ordered to pay.

Abdulaal pleaded guilty on July 13 before Judge Cavanaugh to an Information charging one count of conspiracy and one count of credit card fraud.

Abdulaal has been in federal custody pending today’s sentencing. When he pleaded guilty, Abdulaal was serving a 27-month federal prison sentence for bank fraud in a separate criminal matter.

Abdulaal registered as entering the United States from Jordan in December 1990. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in June 1996.

In his plea agreement, Abdulaal stipulated that the credit card fraud scheme in which he and his co-conspirators engaged resulted in between at least \$1 million and as much as \$2.5 million in fraudulent charges at Abdulaal’s business and elsewhere.

At his plea hearing, Abdulaal admitted to incurring bogus charges using the credit card machine at his computer and electronics store, PC Tech, in Fair Lawn, and another credit card machine he obtained in the business name of “Exponent Enterprises,” as part of the fraud. Abdulaal further admitted that he and others used credit cards in the names of others involved in the scheme to incur bogus charges at Abdulaal’s businesses and elsewhere, knowing the credit card companies would never be reimbursed for those charges.

Abdulaal admitted that he provided no merchandise in exchange for the bogus charges at his store, and that he charged the credit cards to obtain money from the credit card companies. Abdulaal also admitted that, when the credit card companies paid Abdulaal for the charges made at his businesses, Abdulaal shared the proceeds with other individuals involved in the scheme, including the credit card holders. According to the Information to which he pleaded guilty, Abdulaal also sent some of the proceeds of the credit card fraud overseas, including to Jordan and Lebanon.

Abdulaal was arrested in connection with the credit card fraud case on June 30, 2005. At that time, he was serving a 27-month sentence at the Federal Correctional Center in Fort Dix for an April 2002 bank fraud. Pursuant to a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney’s

Office, Abdulaal plead guilty to the 2002 bank fraud in February 2003, and was sentenced on that charge by U.S. District Judge William G. Bassler in February 2004.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Leslie G. Wisner, Jr., for the investigation of Abdulaal.

The case was prosecuted by by Assistant U.S. Attorney Judith H. Germano of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark.

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Defense Attorney:
Anthony G. Simonetti, Esq., West Trenton