



Department of Justice

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EIGHT PLEAD GUILTY IN SHAM MARRIAGE SCHEME

CINCINNATI – Eight Cincinnati-area residents have pleaded guilty to arranging multiple sham marriages in order to help resident aliens obtain permanent legal residence status.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Investigations in Ohio and Michigan, announced the pleas today.

ICE agents assisted by local law enforcement agencies arrested the eight March 5, 2009 after they were indicted along with two other individuals who remain at large.

All eight have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit marriage fraud and provide false information: Guilty pleas were entered by

Oksana Helms, 28, South Lebanon, on May 11. Helms role was to prepare fraudulent immigration documents.

Dmitry Mistryukov, 27, Mainville on June 10. Mistryukov aided the conspiracy by coaching couples for immigration interviews.

Alena Atamaniuk, 28, Burlington, Kentucky on June 17. Atamanuik arranged marriages between foreign nationals and US citizens.

Anna Litivinenko Johnson, aka Anne Johnson, 25, Mason, pleaded guilty late yesterday. Litivinenko Johnson recruited foreign nationals to marry US citizens.

Talgat Abishev, 28, Indianapolis, Indiana, pleaded guilty late yesterday. Abishev recruited foreign nationals to marry US citizens and coached couples for immigration interviews.

Katsiaryna Mosser Usachova, 25, Burlington, Kentucky on June 22. Mosser Usachova prepared immigration documents.

Durrell Hammonds, 27, Cincinnati on June 17. Hammonds recruited US citizens to marry foreign nationals.

Stephanie Snyder, 29, Cincinnati pleaded guilty late yesterday. Snyder recruited US citizens to marry foreign nationals.

Two defendants remaining at large are:

Azat Murtazin, age 27, of Union City, New Jersey,
Grigori Porh, age 23, of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The ten defendants conspired between August, 2005 and August, 2008 to arrange marriages between Eastern European aliens and U.S. citizens. They charged fees to the aliens and paid the U.S. citizens to marry them. They created false documents indicating that the marriages were legal and presented the false documents to immigration officials.

“Conspiracy to commit marriage fraud is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000 and three years of supervised release,” Lockhart said. “The court, however, will determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.”

"The crimes committed by these defendants and those like them impact the integrity and fairness of our nation's immigration system," said Brian Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge (SAC) of the ICE Office of Investigations in Michigan and Ohio. "Not only are our overall security efforts hampered by the frequent use of fraudulent documents but this illicit activity also serves to reward those who flaunt our laws with a path to citizenship. Neither is acceptable."

All defendants entered their guilty plea before U.S. District Judge Michael R. Barrett, who will set dates for sentencing.

Mistryukov, Atamaniuk, Litivinenko Johnson, Abishev, Mosser Usachova, and Snyder have been in custody since their arrest.

Mistryukov, Atamaniuk, Litivinenko Johnson, Abishev, and Mosser Usachova, also face deportation after they serve their sentences.

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