



Department of Justice

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IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY AND ASSOCIATE INDICTED ON MARRIAGE FRAUD CHARGES

COLUMBUS – A federal grand jury here today indicted Columbus-area immigration attorney Lilian Asante, 37 and an associate of hers, Kwadwo Asante, 39, charging them with unlawfully entering into marriages with U.S. citizens in order to evade U.S. immigration laws.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Brian Moskowitz, special agent in charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Investigations in Detroit (ICE) announced the indictment returned today.

The indictment alleges that the two people, who are Ghanaian nationals, began a conspiracy to commit marriage fraud in November 2004 by soliciting U.S. citizens to marry them in order to evade U.S. immigration laws. The indictment alleges that Kwadwo Asante married a U.S. citizen in Columbus on January 22, 2005 then met with immigration officials in January 2006 in an effort to get a “green card” which permits them to have permanent residence status in the U.S.

The indictment charges Lilian Asante with entering into a sham marriage in Columbus on February 25, 2006. She allegedly met with immigration officials in January 2007 and again in June 2009 in an effort to obtain a green card.

ICE agents arrested both defendants on July 24. According to an affidavit filed in order to get the arrest warrant, the two were married to each other in Ghana in 1999, came to the U.S. legally in 2002 and dissolved their marriage in 2004.

“Each defendant is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud and one count of marriage fraud,” Lockhart said. “Each crime is punishable by up to five years imprisonment.”

“Immigration attorneys hold positions of public trust and are critical to the workings of our nation’s immigration system” said Moskowitz of ICE. “Those who choose to betray that trust will be aggressively pursued and held accountable for their actions to the full extent of the law.”

An indictment is merely an accusation. All defendants should be presumed innocent until and unless convicted in a court of law.

Lockhart commended the investigation by ICE agents and Assistant U.S. Attorney Salvador A. Dominguez, who is prosecuting the case.

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