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CO-CONSPIRATORS SENTENCED TO PRISON **FOR ALIEN HARBORING CRIMES**

Employment Agency Owners Provided Jobs to Illegal Aliens, & a Third Individual Transported and Housed Aliens

Atlanta, GA - PIK TO CHENG, 49, a/k/a "Shirley Wise," of Norcross, Georgia; LIN CHEN, 33, of Tucker, Georgia; and FRANCISCO MARTINEZ-ANAYA, 47, of Chamblee, Georgia, were each sentenced to prison today by Chief United States District Judge Julie E. Carnes on charges of conspiracy to engage in alien harboring and transportation of aliens.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of the sentencings today, "These defendants ran businesses whose primary function was to find jobs for illegal immigrants at Chinese restaurants and other Asian-run businesses. Those who knowingly provide illegal workers with the means of getting a job violate federal law, as do the employers of illegal immigrants. Cheng's 'Number One Employment Agency' and Chan's 'Da Zhong Employment Agency' were often one of the first stops for illegal immigrants in Georgia. These businesses have now been dismantled. Other business owners who place illegal immigrants in jobs will also face prosecution and prison."

Kenneth Smith, Special Agent in Charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Office of Investigations in Atlanta said, "Employers that seek to gain an unfair business advantage over their competitors by using illegal workers should take note of today's sentences. Investigations like this one are an essential part of our enforcement strategy. ICE remains resolute in our responsibility to hold employers accountable for their actions, to give law-abiding businesses a fair chance to compete."

Greg Jones, FBI Atlanta Special Agent in Charge, said, "Today's sentences demonstrate that the FBI, by working together in this investigation and similar investigations with our law enforcement partners, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and United States Postal Service, Atlanta, Georgia, can have a significant impact on the criminal element operating within our community and beyond. Although the employment agencies were based here in the Atlanta area, their placement of workers reached far beyond the state. This safe-haven for illegal workers has been dismantled as a

result of this collective effort.”

Martin D. Phanco, Postal Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division, said, “These crimes involving illegal workers often involve fake documentation and paperwork. The U.S. Postal Inspectors will work hard and diligently with our partners to make sure we go after criminals who use phony documents, and use people, for their personal gain.”

CHENG, who cooperated with the government by providing information in related cases, was sentenced to 1 year, 6 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. CHENG pleaded guilty to these charges on November 24, 2008. CHEN, who cooperated with the government and testified against another employment agency owner, was sentenced to 1 year, 3 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. CHEN pleaded guilty to these charges on August 28, 2008, and will be deported upon completion of her sentence. MARTINEZ-ANAYA was sentenced to 1 year, 6 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. MARTINEZ-ANAYA pleaded guilty to these charges on November 24, 2008, and will be deported upon completion of his sentence.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: The employment agencies operated by CHENG and CHEN placed illegal immigrant workers in Chinese restaurants in various states, including Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, and New York, and in a warehouse in Florida. On one occasion, CHENG placed two workers in a Chinese restaurant in New York, essentially exchanging them for two workers who had been at the restaurant. The workers often worked 12 hours a day, six to seven days a week. It was common for the same worker to return to the employment agencies looking for new jobs. Some workers told the government that they were never asked for documents authorizing them to work. CHENG and CHEN would make a commission for every worker they placed. The men who drove workers to their job locations, including MARTINEZ-ANAYA, would make money off the transportation as well.

On at least one occasion, when a job placement did not work out, MARTINEZ-ANAYA arranged for transportation back to Chamblee so the illegal immigrant could find another job. While waiting for another job, MARTINEZ-ANAYA housed the illegal immigrant in a “safe house” he owned. During an undercover operation, an ICE confidential informant was told by MARTINEZ-ANAYA that he did not need any documentation in order to work.

CHEN testified in the trial of LIANG YANG, who was convicted by a jury last week. CHEN outlined how she and other agency owners located at 3425 Chamblee Dunwoody Road acted essentially as brokers between illegal workers coming to their agencies looking for jobs and restaurant owners calling the agencies looking for cheap labor. CHEN testified that only 1 in 100 workers for whom she found jobs were legal. She also testified that

restaurant owners liked more recently arrived workers as they did not know as much about the system and could be paid less than illegal immigrants who had been in the United States for a longer period of time.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Postal Inspectors with the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Assistant United States Attorneys Brian Pearce, Susan Coppedge, Mary Kruger and Michael J. Brown prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.