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OPERATOR OF EMPLOYMENT AGENCY SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS

Liang Yang Transported Illegal Aliens and Provided Jobs in Chinese Restaurants Throughout the East Coast

Atlanta, GA - LAING YANG, 37, of Duluth, Georgia was sentenced today by United States District Judge Timothy C. Batten to serve 5 years in federal prison on charges of conspiring to harbor illegal aliens.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "Operating out of a strip mall in Chamblee, five employment agency owners have now been convicted for finding jobs for illegal immigrants in Chinese restaurants up and down the eastern United States. This defendant knew the workers would not be asked for work authorization and would be willing to pay referral fees to him. He profited for a time from his exploitation of the immigration laws and the illegal workers, but his prison sentence should remind those who employ or find jobs for illegal aliens -- alien harboring can be a costly crime."

"All too often, illegal alien workers are exploited in some fashion by the businesses that hire them, and that is unacceptable," said Kenneth A. Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Atlanta. "We will continue using our investigative tools to pursue those who take advantage of illegal labor for personal profit."

YANG was sentenced to five years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release. YANG was convicted of these charges on April 23, 2009, after a trial.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and other information presented in court: YANG had previously operated an employment agency in Atlanta from 2001 to 2003, which found jobs in Chinese restaurants, predominantly for illegal Hispanic workers. YANG returned to the employment agencies and his illegal activity in November 2007. YANG was fluent in Spanish and two Chinese dialects and he served as the broker between the illegal workers and Chinese restaurants looking for cheap labor. YANG was able to place these illegal workers in jobs in Chinese restaurants and also provide the illegal workers' transportation to the restaurants without any initial payment by the workers. The

transportation fee and YANG's commission would be paid up-front by the restaurant owner, who would then deduct that cost from the wages paid to the worker.

The investigation included surveillance and undercover agents posing as undocumented workers seeking jobs from YANG at "Dong Sheng Employment Agency," located in the Chamblee area. Neither the undercover agent nor the other aliens present and seeking employment were ever asked for documentation that they were authorized to work in this country. The undercover agent captured on tape the defendant offering a job working 7 days a week, for 12 hours a day, for the salary of \$1,000 per month. Two men who had driven the aliens to jobs in Ohio, Kentucky, Alabama, South Carolina and Georgia testified at trial against YANG and stated that they would drive the workers to the Chinese restaurant where they would be paid a referral fee that ranged from \$800 to \$1,000 per worker, and they would return that fee to YANG. Testimony at trial showed that YANG was placing up to 10 workers a week. The drivers were also paid based on the number of illegal aliens they transported. Today the Court found that YANG harbored over 100 illegal aliens in a 4 month period and YANG received the maximum sentence of five years in federal prison.

YANG was the only defendant in this network of employment agency owners and operators who went to trial. The remaining operators pleaded guilty to similar charges. Defendant Pik To Cheng, a/k/a "Shirley Wise," and defendant Lin Chen received lesser sentences of 18 months and 15 months respectively, based in part on their cooperation in the investigation. Another defendant, Hong Mei Li, will be sentenced on July 17, 2009, before United States District Judge Julie Carnes.

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

Assistant United States Attorneys Susan Coppedge and Brian Pearce 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.