



Department of Justice

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HEAD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR IMMIGRATION FRAUD CONSPIRACY

Songwoo Shim Obtained Fraudulent Certification for School and Used School as Front to Issue Fraudulent Immigration Documents to Illegal Aliens

Atlanta, GA - SONGWOO SHIM, 48, of Lawrenceville, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell, Jr. to serve 3 years, 10 months in federal prison for conspiring to encourage and induce aliens to reside unlawfully in the United States and for manufacturing fraudulent visa documents.

Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "This defendant obtained approval from the Department of Homeland Security to operate an English language school by submitting a fraudulent application. He then used the school as a front for manufacturing and selling fraudulent immigration documents to hundreds of unlawful aliens who were not entitled to remain in the United States. The sentence handed down today is appropriate for his fraudulent scheme to circumvent the immigration laws of the United States."

"Immigration fraud poses a serious threat to national security and public safety. It creates a vulnerability that may enable terrorists, criminals, and illegal aliens to enter and remain in the United States," said Kenneth Smith, Special Agent in Charge of ICE's Office of Investigations in Atlanta. "ICE will not tolerate this flagrant violation of law and will continue to bring these violators to justice."

SHIM was sentenced to 3 years, 10 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and ordered to forfeit \$24,000 seized related to the case. SHIM was convicted of these charges on June 4, 2009 after pleading guilty.

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: SHIM submitted a fraudulent I-17 petition to the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), supported by letters purportedly issued by three educational institutions of higher

learning. SEVP is the DHS program that provides approval and oversight to schools authorized to enroll nonimmigrant students. Non-accredited educational institutions seeking SEVP certification must submit letters from three institutions that are accredited by the United States Department of Education stating that the institutions have accepted transfer credits unconditionally on behalf of the students. The three letters submitted by SHIM in support of the I-17 petition for HLLC were forged or fraudulently obtained without the knowledge of the accredited institutions that purportedly issued the letters. In July 2006, DHS awarded SEVP-approved status to Humana Language Learning Center in Duluth, which SHIM managed and operated, based on the fraudulent I-17 petition he submitted.

After SHIM fraudulently obtained SEVP certification for Humana Language Learning Center, he and other individuals acting at his direction, including co-defendant IN YOUNG PARK, 36, of Duluth, Georgia, began facilitating the issuance of F-1 student visas to foreign-born individuals who were not eligible for those visas. SHIM, PARK, and others acting at SHIM's direction manufactured and provided false documents, including resumes, school transcripts, diplomas, financial plans and statements, and I-94 forms, to the aliens to be used in support of applications for F-1 nonimmigrant student status. SHIM maintained document labs with computer equipment and files, first in an apartment in Alpharetta and then at an apartment in Duluth, where the fraudulent documents were manufactured. Although Humana Language Learning Center reported to DHS that it had enrolled hundreds of students, the vast majority of the aliens who obtained F-1 status never attended Humana Language Learning Center. SHIM charged the aliens thousands of dollars, purportedly as "tuition," but actually for the fraudulent documents he provided them for the purpose of obtaining F-1 status.

PARK was convicted on June 12, 2009, after pleading guilty to conspiring with SHIM to encourage and induce aliens to reside unlawfully in the United States and to manufacture fraudulent immigration documents. PARK worked for SHIM and was responsible for creating the fraudulent documents in the two document labs. On August 11, 2009, Judge Pannell sentenced PARK to 2 years, 3 months in federal prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. Upon her release from prison, PARK, who is not a United States citizen, will be turned over to immigration authorities for proceedings to remove her from the United States.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, assisted by other law enforcement agencies in the Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force.

Assistant United States Attorneys Teresa D. Hoyt and Stephen H. McClain prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting 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.