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**IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT AND SIX WOMEN INDICTED
IN VISA FRAUD RING ALLEGING SHAM MARRIAGES**

CHICAGO -- A Chicago man who allegedly operated a fraudulent immigration consulting business serving primarily the Indian community on the city's north side is facing federal racketeering and other charges, together with five women who allegedly participated in sham immigration marriages and a sixth woman who helped recruit them. A federal jury late yesterday returned a 35-count indictment against the seven defendants, including **Jessie Isaac**, the alleged leader of a wide-ranging immigration fraud ring, announced Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. The indictment alleges that from at least November 1999 to July 2001, Isaac operated and purported to operate multiple businesses located at 7459 North Western Ave., where, in exchange for fees, he and his employees provided and purported to provide assistance in obtaining immigration benefits, including employment authorization and permanent residence status for foreign nationals.

Isaac was charged with presenting false documents to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, at times concealing the fraud from his customers and misleading them to believe that he would obtain the

benefits on their behalf. As part of the enterprise, Isaac allegedly arranged sham marriages to U.S. citizens and fraudulently applied for special work visas and certificates, according to the indictment.

Isaac, also known as “Jessie Isaacs,” 51, of 2421 West Pratt Blvd., Apt. 122, Chicago, was charged with racketeering, five counts of aiding and abetting marriage fraud and 29 counts related to visa or immigration document fraud. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of the alleged racketeering proceeds, totaling at least \$402,000, from Isaac.

Also indicted was **Hilda Rosa Figueroa**, 30, of 3509 West Adams, Apt. 2A, Chicago, who was charged with two counts of aiding and abetting marriage fraud for allegedly helping Isaac to recruit U.S. citizens to marry foreign nationals to unlawfully obtain immigration benefits. The five women charged with entering into sham marriages are: **Christina Murillo**, 24, of 5518 South Washtenaw, Chicago; **Stephanie Kirgan**, 21, of Springfield, Mo.; **Marie Wordlaw**, 23, of 4750 North Sheridan, Chicago; **Theresa Robinson**, 35, of 4928 West Cuyler, Apt. 2C, Chicago; and **Luz “Nelly” Vega**, 42, of 4854 West Armitage, 1st floor, Chicago. Each of the five was charged with one count of marriage fraud. All seven defendants will be ordered to appear for arraignment in U.S. District Court at a later date.

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the charges with Brian R. Perryman, District Director of Immigration and Naturalization Service, and J. D. Nichols, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Labor Department’s Office of Inspector General.

“This indictment reflects the lucrative nature of this kind of illegal criminal enterprise,” Mr. Perryman said. “The INS warns those who choose to commit such immigration fraud that we are using every appropriate statute to seek the stiffest penalties possible. We thank the Department of Labor and the Illinois Department of Employment Security for their assistance in this investigation

as we strive to protect our nation's legal immigration process for those who are rightfully entitled to its benefits.”

According to the indictment, Isaac advised foreign nationals that they could obtain work authorization quickly if they married a U.S. citizen and he offered to arrange such marriages. Once a customer agreed, Isaac, either directly or through Figueroa or another agent, recruited a U.S. citizen to serve as a sham spouse for approximately \$600. The citizen was told that she would not have to live with the foreign national and would receive a monthly fee, along with additional money when it came time to be interviewed by the INS. At the same time, Isaac advised the foreign national to add the sham wife's name to utility accounts and to open a joint checking account. After the marriage was performed, Isaac allegedly assisted in completing and submitting immigration documents seeking work authorizations and permanent resident status based upon the marriages.

The indictment also alleges that Isaac, together with associates and various business entities, presented and caused to be presented various false statements in forms seeking, in some cases, H-1B visas, a nonimmigrant visa initiated by an employer for a foreign national working in a “specialty occupation.” Other false statements and documents related to Alien Employment Certifications, which enable domestic employers to hire foreign nationals, and permit them to become permanent residents, if they work in fields for which there are insufficient, qualified U.S. workers. For example, Isaac submitted documents asserting that foreign nationals would be employed by one his purported businesses in a specific job, at a specific location, at a specific salary, and for a specific length of time. The indictment alleges 25 separate racketeering acts involving immigration fraud on behalf of various foreign nationals.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lela D. Johnson.

If convicted of racketeering, Isaac faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, while each count of visa or immigration document fraud carries a maximum penalty

of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. For Isaac and the other defendants, each count of marriage fraud or aiding and abetting carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

As an alternative fine on some counts, the Court may order a fine totaling twice the gross loss to any victim or twice the gain to the defendant, whichever is greater. The Court, which also must order restitution, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the United States has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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