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News Release

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Northfield man sentenced for using another's identity to commit passport fraud, Social Security fraud

Earlier today in federal court in St. Paul, a 52-year-old Northfield man was sentenced for using the identity of others, including that of a dead man, and attempting to obtain passports, a social security card, bank accounts, and credit cards with false identification. United States District Court Judge Paul A. Magnuson sentenced Peter Bruce Mathews to 34 months in prison on two counts of making a false statement in an application for a passport, two counts of social security fraud, and four counts of aggravated identity theft. Mathews, also known as Peter Hammer, was indicted on September 15, 2010, and was convicted on December 16, 2010, following a three-day trial.

According to evidence presented at trial, in April of 2007, Mathews made a false statement on a passport application and committed social security fraud and aggravated identity theft when he used the name, date of birth, and social security number of a deceased person in an attempt to obtain a passport. Then, in March of 2009, he falsified another passport application and again committed social security fraud and aggravated identity theft by using the social security number of yet another individual in an effort to acquire a passport.

According to a law enforcement affidavit filed in the case, Mathews applied for a United States passport on July 3, 1997, in St. Paul, identifying himself as someone else. In support of the application, he presented a Minnesota driver's license and a Minnesota birth certificate with the same false name. Then, on March 24, 2009, he applied for a second passport in Faribault, Minnesota, under yet another name. Again, he presented a corresponding driver's license and birth certificate.

On October 23, 2008, the U.S. Department of State was notified by the Social Security Administration—Office of Inspector General ("SSA-OIG") that an individual listed in the database as someone who had died on August 3, 1993, had just applied for a social security card.

The applicant had used a U.S. passport to validate his identity. Authorities later found that four passport applications had been made by Mathews, using two different names.

This case was the result of an investigation by the State Department-Diplomatic Security Service and the SSA-OIG.

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