

## JUSTICE NEWS

## Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

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**Used Motor Vehicle Dealers Indicted by Federal Grand Jury in Casper, Wyoming for Odometer Tampering**

WASHINGTON – A federal grand jury in Casper, Wyo., Thursday returned an indictment charging Randy Lee (a/k/a Jimmy Lee) and Jay Lee (a/k/a John Marks, a/k/a Anthony Romero) of Cheyenne, Wyo., with odometer tampering, title fraud, securities fraud, mail fraud and conspiracy to commit these offenses. The indictment alleges that the defendants worked as used car dealers at Lee's RV's, Inc., a dealership in Cheyenne. According to the indictment, as early as 2002, and through at least 2006, the defendants devised a scheme to defraud buyers of used motor vehicles by misrepresenting the mileage of vehicles they sold.

As part of the scheme, the indictment charges that the Lees purchased high-mileage, used motor vehicles from various businesses in New Mexico and Wyoming, as well as from a wholesale motor vehicle auction in Loveland, Colo. The defendants are charged with altering the odometers in these vehicles to reflect false, lower mileage. The Lees then fraudulently altered the motor vehicle titles and sales documentation associated with the these vehicles to reflect the false, lower mileage. As a result, the state of Wyoming issued motor vehicle titles reflecting this false, lower mileage, which the Lees knew to be untrue.

The defendants subsequently sold the motor vehicles to local consumers, other used motor vehicle dealers and at wholesale auto auctions, sometimes without stating that the false, lower mileages were inaccurate. As a result, the Lees received higher sales prices for the vehicles they sold, the indictment alleges.

"It is a crime for individuals who buy and sell used vehicles to change the odometers on the cars to increase their value," said Tony West, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division of the Department of Justice. "People who buy used vehicles need accurate mileage information to assess the value and safety of the vehicle. We take seriously our obligation to prosecute those who violate these statutes."

According to the indictment, some of the vehicles were sold with false, low mileage written on the title, but with a notice that the odometer reading was not accurate. The indictment adds that the defendants did not reveal the true mileage of the vehicle, which could be more than 100,000 miles more than what the title indicated.

"Car dealers who take miles off of vehicles cannot escape prosecution by checking a box on the back of the title," said Kelly H. Rankin, U.S. Attorney for the District of Wyoming. "That sort of practice leaves consumers in the dark about the real mileage of the vehicle. The purpose of the law is to provide accurate information, and the exception in the statute for vehicles with unknown mileage does not create a loophole for unscrupulous dealers who roll back odometers and conceal the true mileage."

The charges in the indictment are only allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, each defendant faces up to 20 years in prison on the most serious of the charges.

Assistant Attorney General West thanked the Wyoming Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Wyoming for their assistance in investigating and prosecuting this case.

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Civil Division