



United States Attorney's Office District of Connecticut Press Release

January 28, 2009 NEW YORK RESIDENT INVOLVED IN CASH SMUGGLING CONSPIRACY IS SENTENCED

Nora R. Dannehy, Acting United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that HASSAN ABUZAITOUN, 35, a naturalized United States citizen from Jordan last residing in Yonkers, New York, was sentenced yesterday, January 28, by United States District Judge Stefan R. Underhill in Bridgeport to approximately 11 months of imprisonment, time served, for participating in a conspiracy to smuggle bulk quantities of cash from the United States to Jordan. On December 15, 2008, ABUZAITOUN pleaded guilty to one count of an Indictment that charged him and others with conspiring to smuggle bulk quantities of cash from the United States to Jordan via airplane, for the purposes of concealing the true ownership of the funds and evading the United States' cash reporting requirements.

According to documents filed with the Court and statements made in court, ABUZAITOUN acknowledged that he served as a "middle man" who helped broker a deal between co-defendant Mohammad Alazzam, also a naturalized United States citizen from Jordan, and a Jordanian national, through which they intended to smuggle, via multiple trips aboard an airplane, \$500,000 in cash that they believed to be the fruits of an illegal credit card fraud scheme. ABUZAITOUN acknowledged contacting the Jordanian national and making arrangements for him to smuggle the cash from the United States to Jordan. The Jordanian national was an associate of ABUZAITOUN who frequently traveled between the United States and Jordan.

ABUZAITOUN and Alazzam expected to be paid five percent of the money being smuggled as their fee, split equally between them, and the Jordanian national was to be paid an additional five percent. On multiple occasions in late 2007 and early 2008, Alazzam traveled to Connecticut in order to receive items of value that were represented to be the proceeds of the illegal credit card scheme, and to discuss the smuggling of bulk quantities of cash proceeds from the scheme to Jordan. In addition, in February 2008, during recorded telephone conversations, Alazzam and ABUZAITOUN discussed the smuggling of the \$500,000 in cash to Jordan and discussed their anticipated fee, while admonishing each other not to speak openly about the bulk cash smuggling plans over the phone.

On September 24, 2008, Alazzam pleaded guilty to one of conspiring to engage in money laundering. He awaits sentencing.

ABUZAITOUN and Alazzam were arrested on February 18, 2008.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Secret Service, the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division, and U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Stephen B. Reynolds.

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