

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2009

Queens Man Admits Supplying
Social Security Numbers to Fraud Ring

(More)

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NEWARK – A Queens, N.Y. man pleaded guilty today to supplying Social Security numbers to members of an identity fraud ring, acting United States Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

Yomi Jagunna, 44, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Susan D. Wigenton to one count of conspiracy to commit identity theft. Sentencing is scheduled for Aug. 12.

Jagunna, whose bail is set at \$1 million, was returned to custody, where he has been since his arrest on a criminal Complaint in New York on Oct. 28. A one-count Indictment charging him in the conspiracy was returned on March 23.

At the plea hearing before Judge Wigenton, Jagunna admitted to agreeing with others to sell Social Security numbers of victims without their authorization. Jagunna admitted to maintaining an account with a commercial database provider in the name of Elam Collection Agency, which Jagunna held out to be a legitimate debt collection company. Using the database account, Jagunna looked up Social Security numbers and provided them in person and by e-mail to co-conspirators for approximately \$30 per Social Security number.

The government asserted in court that it would have introduced evidence at trial showing that Jagunna made approximately 100,000 separate queries in furtherance of this and similar schemes since 2002. Jagunna admitted that he knew he was providing Social Security numbers in furtherance of unlawful activity.

Jagunna is one of eight defendants charged in New Jersey between August and November 2008 in connection with an international identity theft and bank fraud ring, in which the defendants conspired to deplete available funds from home equity lines of credit (“HELOCs”) and other accounts belonging to identity theft victims, either by engineering fraudulent withdrawals or by gaining unauthorized access to the victims’ on-line bank accounts. The remaining seven defendants, all of whom are charged by complaint and detained pending trial, are: Derrick Polk, 46, of Los Angeles, Calif.; Oludola Akinmola, 38, Oladeji Craig, 40, of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Oluwajide Ogunbiyi, 32, of Springfield, Ill.; Hakeem Olokodana, 41, of Queens, N.Y.; Abayomi Lawal, 45, of Brooklyn; and Daniel Yummi, 40, of New York.

Jagunna faces a maximum statutory prison sentence of 15 years and a statutory maximum fine of \$250,000. In determining and actual sentence, Judge Wigenton will consult the advisory U. S. Sentencing Guidelines, based upon a formula that takes into account the severity and characteristics of the offense and of the defendant’s criminal history, if any. However, the Sentencing Guidelines are only advisory, and Judge Wigenton has wide discretion in imposing sentence. There is no parole in the federal system, and defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Acting U.S. Attorney Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, and Special Agents of the IRS Criminal Investigations Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. States Attorneys Erez Liebermann and Seth Kosto of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Newark.

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Defense counsel:

Carl Herman, Esq., West Orange, for Jagunna

Marc Leibman, Esq., Fort Lee, for Yummi

John Tiffany, Esq., Newark, for Olokodana

David Epstein, Esq., Brooklyn, for Lawal

David Glaser, Esq., Livingston, for Craig

Cynthia Hardaway, Esq., Newark, for Polk

Steven Goldenberg, Esq., New York, for Akinmola

Paulette Pitt, Esq., Passaic, for Ogunbiyi