



Department of Justice

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LITHONIA DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAMINERS CHARGED WITH IDENTITY THEFT AND FRAUD

ATLANTA, GA - SHIJUANNA V. COBB, 33, of Ellenwood, Georgia, RICKELL M. PATTERSON, 31, of Covington, Georgia, ANGELA R. READ, 38, of Lithonia, Georgia, and CHARDYE M. LLOYD, 23, of Conyers, Georgia – all formerly Georgia Department of Driver Services driver's license examiners – have been indicted by a federal grand jury for conspiring with HARIKRISHNA A. PATEL, 26, of Snellville, Georgia, and SATISHKUMAR B. PATEL, 48, of Nashville, Tennessee, to commit identity fraud and identity theft by unlawfully issuing Georgia driver's licenses to illegal aliens. Additionally, COBB, PATTERSON, READ and LLOYD have been charged in a separate indictment with conspiring to issue commercial driver's licenses to unqualified applicants, including COBB, READ, and two men identified as "A.A." and "D.M." That indictment charges that COBB, READ, and D.M. used their fraudulently issued commercial licenses to obtain jobs as MARTA bus drivers.

"Corruption in public employment is intolerable," said United States Attorney David E. Nahmias. "Our office has a long tradition of investigating and prosecuting those who violate the public's trust at every level of government. In this case, several Driver Services examiners allegedly abused their positions for cash, allowing more than 130 illegal aliens to fraudulently obtain a critically important identification document, and for commercial driver's licenses, which enabled them to endanger the public by working as unqualified bus drivers."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the charges, and other information presented in court: Between January and August 2007, HARIKRISHNA PATEL charged illegal aliens between \$7,000 and \$8,000 each to help them obtain driver's licenses at the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS) Customer Service Center No. 67 in Lithonia. HARIKRISHNA PATEL allegedly arranged with COBB or PATTERSON to have the aliens receive licenses, and in return for payments of unknown amounts from PATEL, COBB, PATTERSON, READ or LLOYD allegedly issued the licenses to the aliens without requiring them to take any tests or to produce proof of legal residency in Georgia. During the charged conspiracy period, COBB, PATTERSON, READ and LLOYD allegedly issued licenses to 136 applicants who did not qualify for them under Georgia law. The indictment charges that SATISHKUMAR PATEL participated in the conspiracy by transporting illegal aliens from Nashville to LITHONIA, where HARIKRISHNA PATEL arranged for them to obtain licenses from COBB or PATTERSON.

COBB, PATTERSON, READ and LLOYD are also charged in a separate indictment with conspiring to issue commercial driver's licenses or commercial learner's permits unlawfully between August 2006 and November 2007. Georgia law requires applicants to pass written exams before they can be issued commercial licenses. The indictment charges that the conspirators manually input passing exam scores into the DDS computer system, which made it possible for them to issue commercial licenses or learner's permits to COBB, PATTERSON, READ, and two unindicted persons identified in the indictment by the initials "A.A." and "D.M." The indictment further charges that COBB, READ and D.M. used their unlawfully issued commercial licenses to work as MARTA bus drivers, while A.A. used his to work as a commercial truck driver.

The indictments charge the defendants with several counts of conspiracy, identity fraud, and aggravated identity theft. HARIKRISHNA PATEL, SATISH PATEL, COBB, PATTERSON, READ and LLOYD are charged with conspiring to commit identity fraud. HARIKRISHNA PATEL and COBB are charged with two counts of aiding and abetting each other in identity fraud and aggravated identity theft. HARIKRISHNA PATEL and PATTERSON are charged with two counts of aiding and abetting each other in identity fraud and aggravated identity theft. READ and LLOYD are each charged with two counts of identity fraud and aggravated identity theft. Additionally, COBB, PATTERSON, READ and LLOYD are charged with conspiring to commit identity fraud in the issuance of commercial driver's licenses, and they are charged with aiding and abetting each other in the transfer of fraudulent identification documents. The conspiracy and identity fraud charges carry maximum sentences of 15 years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 per count. The aggravated identity theft charges carry mandatory minimum sentences of two years in prison, to be served consecutively to any other sentences imposed.

HARIKRISHNA PATEL, COBB, PATTERSON, READ and LLOYD were

arrested and arraigned before United States Magistrate Judge Alan J. Baverman late yesterday. SATISHKUMAR PATEL was also arrested yesterday and is scheduled to make his initial appearance before a United States Magistrate Judge in Nashville sometime today.

The DDS is cancelling all of the licenses involved in this case. Nearly all of the addresses on the 136 drivers licenses issued to illegal aliens have turned out to be false or fraudulent, but three of the illegal aliens who allegedly received licenses through HARIKRISHNA PATEL, COBB and PATTERSON have been located in Nashville, and they are cooperating with the investigation. The identity and location of the other recipients of fraudulent licenses remain under investigation. COBB, READ and LLOYD left their jobs as license examiners in late 2007 or early 2008, and the DDS terminated PATTERSON from her position in September 2008.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, U. S. Bureau of Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Georgia Department of Driver Services.

Assistant United States Attorney William Traynor is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.