



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Investigation Results in Two-Year Conviction in Marriage Fraud Ring

HOUSTON- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) assisted in the investigation of a large-scale marriage fraud ring which led to a federal jury finding Letrisha Andrews, 38, Justice Daniel, 42, and Folarin H. Alabi, 35, guilty on multiple counts of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud, aiding/abetting marriage fraud, marriage fraud, theft of government funds and false statements.

On Monday, Chief U.S. District Judge Lee H. Rosenthal ordered Andrews to serve a total of 24 months in prison immediately followed by three years of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay restitution of \$5,629.00 to the Department of Agriculture. The ringleader—Alabi—was previously sentenced to 18 months in prison. He and Daniel are not U.S. citizens and are expected to face deportation proceedings following their release.

"This investigation, and subsequent sentencing, shows how seriously USCIS takes immigration fraud," said Mark Siegl, director of the USCIS Houston Field Office. "We will continue to work tirelessly with our law enforcement partners to uphold the integrity of our law enforcement system and investigate any leads connected to immigration fraud."

Testimony by USCIS Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate (FDNS) officers and an Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agent during trial revealed that defendants would pay U.S. citizens for entering into fraudulent marriages to Nigerian nationals who had originally entered the country on tourist visas. The conspirators would then complete immigration documents and falsely submit them to USCIS to obtain legal permanent resident status. As part of the conspiracy, the defendants would take staged photographs of themselves as a couple for documentation of an allegedly meaningful relationship. The conspirators also coached the recruits and/or the Nigerian nationals on what to say when questioned or interviewed by law enforcement or immigration officials about the legitimate nature of the marriages.

USCIS FDNS and ICE HSI conducted the joint investigation along with Department of Agriculture. The agencies work together on the Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force which was established to combat these types of crimes in which fraudulent representations are made to multiple government agencies.

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