



PRESS RELEASE

Rancho Cucamonga Man and Woman Found Guilty of Federal Criminal Charges in Connection with 'Birth Tourism' Scheme

Friday, September 13, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District
of California

LOS ANGELES – Two San Bernardino County residents were found guilty by a jury today of operating a “birth tourism” scheme that charged Chinese clients tens of thousands of dollars to help them give birth in the United States to obtain birthright U.S. citizenship for their children.

Michael Wei Yueh Liu (刘维岳), 59, of Rancho Cucamonga, and Jing Dong, (董晶), 47, also of Rancho Cucamonga, were found guilty of one count of conspiracy and 10 counts of international money laundering.

According to evidence presented at a four-day trial, from at least January 2012 to March 2015, Liu and Dong ran a maternity house in Rancho Cucamonga. Liu and Dong rented apartment units in Southern California to provide short-term housing and provided other services to pregnant women from China who traveled to the United States to give birth so their children would acquire U.S. citizenship. Typically, within one or two months after giving birth, the women returned to China.

Among the services Liu and Dong provided was assistance on how to obtain visas to enter the United States, customs entry guidance, housing, and transportation in the United States, as well as assistance applying for U.S. legal documents for the children of their customers.

Liu and Dong advised their customers on how to hide their pregnancies from the immigration authorities. Liu and Dong also knew – or deliberately avoided learning – that their customers lied on their visa applications submitted to immigration authorities to enter the U.S.

Generally, their customers' visa applications falsely stated that the purpose of the trip to the United States was for tourism, when it was to give birth, and the length of the stay was days or weeks, when it was in fact months. The visas also misstated the location where the customers intended to stay, which was defendants' maternity hotel.

Liu and Dong or their agents also advised their customers to fly to ports of entry with perceived less customs scrutiny, such as Hawaii, before flying to Los Angeles, to wear loose fitting clothing, to favor certain lines at customs that they perceived to be less strict, and on how to answer the customs officials' questions.

Liu and Dong received money from overseas and used that money to promote their scheme.

United States District Judge R. Gary Klausner scheduled a December 9 sentencing hearing, at which time Liu and Dong will face a statutory maximum sentence of five years in federal prison for the conspiracy charge and up to 20 years in federal prison for each international money laundering charge.

Homeland Security Investigations, IRS Criminal Investigation, and the FBI investigated this matter. The Irvine Police Department and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department provided substantial assistance.

Assistant United States Attorneys Gregory W. Staples and Kevin Y. Fu of the Santa Ana Branch Office are prosecuting this case.

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