



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias
Northern District of Georgia

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

NINE CHARGED IN TELEVISION SHOPPING NETWORK FRAUD

ATLANTA, GA - MOUKARIM ADEGBAYI, 41, of College Park, Georgia; MOYO AKEEN KASIM, 44, of Hampton, Georgia; ABIOYE KASSIM, 44, of Sharpsburg, Georgia; TUNDE AYINLA MOSHUD, 35, of Doraville, Georgia; HAMEED ADAGE OSIEFA, 41, of College Park, Georgia; and GODWIN STEPHEN, 35, of Covington, Georgia, have been charged with wire fraud and conspiracy in a scheme that allegedly defrauded three major television home shopping networks of hundreds of thousands of dollars. BABRU OKOYA, 25, his wife, MORIAMOH OJIKUTA, 24, also of Atlanta, Georgia; and HOPE LASHAWN SMITH, 31, of Covington, Georgia, are alleged to be involved in an identical scheme and were charged in a separate indictment. All defendants except MOUKARIM ADEGBAYI and HOPE LASHAWN SMITH were arrested this morning and are expected to make their initial appearance before United States Magistrate Judge Janet F. King late this afternoon. ADEGBAYI and SMITH are now considered fugitives and anyone with information is asked to call the United States Secret Service. (NEWS MEDIA NOTE: photographs of ADEGBAYI and SMITH may be available after today's hearing.)

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of the case, "These individuals are charged with stealing goods worth nearly \$1 million in hundreds of fraudulent orders they placed over four years. The scope of these alleged fraud schemes is remarkable."

"This investigation is just one example of how we can work together with our partners in federal law enforcement to uncover and prosecute fraudulent activities," said James Byers, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service's Atlanta Field Office.

"U.S. Postal Inspectors have protected the sanctity of the nation's mail system for over 200 years. We remain steadfast in our investigative efforts to bring those to justice who are responsible for committing identity theft and identity fraud where the U.S. mail is used in the furtherance of their schemes. The use of the U.S. mail to commit these frauds will not be tolerated," said Martin D. Phanco, Inspector in Charge, Atlanta Division.

According to Nahmias and the documents and information presented in court: the defendants in these cases are charged with using multiple names, addresses, and credit cards to defraud the Home Shopping Network, the Shop At Home Network, and the QVC Network into sending them hundreds of personal computers, digital cameras, and other electronic devices.

ADEGBAYI, KASIM, KASSIM, MOSHUD, OSIEFA, and STEPHEN were indicted by a federal grand jury on June 19, 2007. According to the indictment, they ordered electronic goods that the shopping networks sold on payment plans. The defendants paid the initial installment payments, which prompted the victims to ship the goods. The defendants would then report their cards as lost or stolen, obtain new cards from their issuing banks, and resume ordering from the network. The defendants allegedly used multiple names, aliases, credit cards, and addresses to prevent the networks from detecting the fraud. The defendants shared several addresses as shipping destinations, including the Lawrenceville address of the house that ADEGBAYI and OSIEFA both listed as their residence on their driver's licenses and the house in College Park where they actually lived. The defendants allegedly took the fraudulently ordered goods to their native country of Nigeria. Between September 2001 and August 2005, the six defendants allegedly placed 424 orders to the three networks for goods worth more than \$640,000, and they caused the victims to lose more than \$280,000. The defendants have each been charged with ten counts of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy. They each face a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison on each wire fraud count, and a maximum of 5 years on the conspiracy count.

Defendants BABRU OKOYA, his wife, MORIAMOH OJIKUTA, along with alleged co-conspirator HOPE LASHAWN SMITH were charged in a separate indictment on June 19, 2007, with participating in an identical scheme to defraud the three networks. During the conspiracy period, they allegedly placed 148 orders for goods worth more than \$281,000, and caused the victims to lose more than \$106,000. All of the defendants except OKOYA are naturalized American citizens; OKOYA is a Nigerian citizen. OKOYA and OJIKUTA each face a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison on each wire fraud count, and a maximum of 5 years on the conspiracy count.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment only contains charges. The defendants are presumed innocent of the charges, and it will be the United States' burden to prove the defendants' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the United States Secret Service, Inspectors from the United States Postal Inspection Service, and Special Agents of the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Assistant United States Attorney William G. Traynor is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias, 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.