



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Sarath Dhanayakage

Battle Creek Resident Charged with Immigration Fraud

Sarath Dhanayakage, 40, an illegal alien from Sri Lanka residing in Battle Creek, Michigan, was indicted today by a federal grand jury in Detroit, Michigan on charges of procuring his admission into the United States by fraud, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced.

According to the charges in the indictment, that Dhanayakage paid an individual \$19,500 for a fraudulent Singapore passport that enabled him to illegally enter the United States on July 5, 2007, without a visa under the Visa Waiver program. Federal agents with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested Dhanayakage on July 7, 2007, after Canadian immigration officials denied Dhanayakage entry into Canada at the Detroit-Canada tunnel and returned him to the United States. ICE has initiated removal proceedings in United States Immigration Court to deport Dhanayakage to Sri Lanka. Dhanayakage faces a sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine if convicted of visa fraud.

In announcing the indictment, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy commended the work of the Special Agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, who

conducted the investigation. "Fraud in connection with immigration benefits circumvents our Nation's ability to control its borders and safely manage the admissions process. My office in coordination with ICE will continue to vigorously and systematically pursue such fraud to detect and take action against those who have obtained immigration benefits unlawfully," said United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by special agents of ICE and by officers of the United States Customs and Border Protection. The case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant United States Attorney Mark Jebson.