



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Nazeer Hamadneh et al

FOUR CHARGED IN VISA FRAUD AND WITNESS TAMPERING SCHEME

A federal Indictment was unsealed today in Detroit charging four individuals with conspiracy to commit mail fraud, mail fraud, witness tampering, conspiracy to commit visa fraud and visa fraud announced Terrence Berg, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Berg was joined in the announcement by Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI and Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Charged in the 24-count indictment are Nazeer Hamadneh, 40, of Dearborn, Abbas Obeid aka Adam Obeid, 34, of Ontario, Canada, Roni Aoub, 27, of Southfield, and Majed Mamo, 40, of Wixom, Michigan.

According to the indictment, during August 2000 and continuing through August 2008, the defendants conspired to defraud educational institutions such as Lawrence Technological University in Southfield and Madonna University in Livonia by submitting fraudulent undergraduate transcripts so that individuals, who paid a fee to the conspirators, would fraudulently obtain transfer credits from those institutions. These credits were applied toward undergraduate degrees, and so that individuals would be accepted for enrollment in graduate programs. The indictment also alleges that, in exchange for money, the conspirators submitted fraudulent undergraduate transcripts to medical schools located in the Caribbean and Belize on behalf of students who otherwise had insufficient undergraduate credits to enter medical school. The indictment alleges that as a result of the defendants' actions, students were admitted to medical school based on the submission of fraudulent undergraduate transcripts.

In addition, the indictment alleges that defendants Nazeer Hamadneh and Abbas Obeid conspired to submit and submitted fraudulent documents on behalf of foreign students in order to obtain student visas for them.

The indictment further alleges that defendants Nazeer Hamadneh and Majed Mamo tampered with witnesses in an effort to prevent witnesses from providing truthful information to law enforcement.

Acting U.S. Attorney Berg said, "Making phony transcripts to deceive a university into granting college credits, or even admission to medical school, to completely unqualified students is a kind of fraud that could have all sorts of dangerous consequences, but this case also involved fake student visas as well. Our office will continue to be vigilant in pursuing all types of immigration fraud."

"Individuals who buy and sell fraudulent college credits not only cheat the educational system; but when used for medical school admissions may endanger public health. Additionally, this undermines the student visa program by allowing individuals into this country who fail to follow through on their obligation to continue their higher education," said Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Detroit Field Office.

"Institutions of higher learning are critical to the advancement of our society and our way of life. Individuals who gain entry into a college or university through fraud undermine the vetting process and depending upon the profession could put the public at risk" said Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations for Michigan and Ohio. "ICE will continue to work with our partners to close this vulnerability."

The conspiracy to commit mail fraud count and each of the mail fraud counts carry a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. The conspiracy to commit visa fraud count carries a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Each of the visa fraud counts carries a maximum penalty of 15 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Each of the witness tampering counts carries a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

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 indictment is the result of a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Cathleen Corken.