



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Sarath Dhanayakage

Illegal Alien from Sri Lanka Residing in Battle Creek, Michigan, Pleads Guilty

Sarath Dhanayakage, 40, an illegal alien from Sri Lanka residing in Battle Creek, Michigan, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Denise Page Hood to visa fraud, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The evidence presented to the court at the time of the plea established 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. Dhanayakage faces a sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Dhanayakage has already been ordered deported from the United States.

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

who conducted the investigation. "My office in coordination with ICE will continue to vigorously and systematically pursue those who have obtained immigration benefits unlawfully," said United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

"Those who seek to enter the United States under false pretenses should take note of the high price they will pay in terms of incarceration and fines" said Brian M. Moskowitz, special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Detroit. "These individuals will be sought out and identified by ICE agents, who in coordination with the United States Attorney's Office will vigorously pursue criminal prosecution to the fullest extent of the law."

Sentencing of Dhanayakage has been set for August 25, 2008 at 2:00 pm.

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