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**U.S. Immigration
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News Releases

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Bay Area sham marriage broker sentenced to 19 months in prison

SAN FRANCISCO - Kwan Tsoi, also known as Joyce Cai, was sentenced in federal court today to 19 months in prison, and ordered to forfeit \$250,000 in proceeds, for arranging fake marriages so her foreign national clients could obtain immigration benefits they did not qualify for.

The prosecution is the result of a joint investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS).

Tsoi admitted in court that for a year, beginning in February 2007, she headed a conspiracy that arranged sham marriages for foreign nationals with U. S. citizens. Tsoi charged her clients, whom she recruited by advertising in Chinese-language newspapers, approximately \$30,000 for her services. Tsoi brokered these marriages in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco, where federal search warrants were served on her business in June 2008.

Tsoi pleaded guilty in April to one count of conspiracy, six counts of marriage fraud and five counts of false statements on immigration documents. As part of her guilty plea, she admitted she brokered nine fake marriages in order to exploit U.S. immigration law. Tsoi also admitted she submitted or assisted in submitting spousal petitions to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services requesting her clients be granted lawful permanent residence or "green cards" based on their fraudulent marriages to American citizens.

"Marriage fraud and other forms of immigration benefit fraud undermine the integrity of our nation's legal immigration system and potentially rob deserving immigrants of benefits they rightfully deserve," said Mark Wollman, special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in San Francisco. "This sentence should send a clear message that ICE is working aggressively to target those who conspire to corrupt our nation's proud immigration tradition for the sole purpose of enriching themselves."

"We take all violations of U.S. immigration laws seriously, but are especially aggressive in identifying and prosecuting those involved in marriage frauds and related scams," U.S. Attorney Joseph P. Russoniello said. "People who attempt to profit from these ruses will be brought to justice. Those who knowingly avail themselves of these ploys will be caught and deported."

Also charged in this investigation were Henry Navarro and Kelly Ecker. Navarro pleaded guilty to one felony count of conspiracy for his role as an "official" witness to one of the fake marriages. Navarro is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Alsup on Sept. 29, 2009. Ecker pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of conspiracy for marrying a Chinese citizen in return for \$17,000. Ecker was sentenced July 7, 2009 to two years probation and ordered to give a public speech designed to deter others from participating in similar schemes.

"The investigation is yet another example of the Diplomatic Security Service's vigilance in combating visa and passport fraud," said DSS San Francisco Field Office Special Agent in Charge Patrick Durkin. "We investigate multi-defendant criminal enterprises that broker in false visas, false immigration forms, and other false documents, to keep imposters and criminals out of the country."

Tsoi has been ordered to surrender to begin serving her prison sentence Sept. 30.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

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