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## News Releases

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DECEMBER 7, 2010 HOUSTON, TX

### **Nigerian man stripped of his U.S. citizenship following his conviction for marriage and naturalization fraud**

HOUSTON - A Nigerian man on Monday was stripped of his U.S. citizenship at his sentencing hearing for conspiracy to commit marriage fraud, marriage fraud, naturalization fraud, and making a false statement to a federal agency. The sentence was announced by U.S. Attorney José Angel Moreno, southern District of Texas. The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

Ibraheem Adeneye, 33, who is originally from Nigeria and became a naturalized U.S. citizen, was convicted of the charges May 7 by a jury. He has been in federal custody on these charges for about six months. U.S. District Judge Kenneth Hoyt sentenced Adeneye to the time he has already served in prison. The judge also granted the government's motion to strip Adeneye of his U.S. citizenship. Adeneye is now subject to deportation.

The ICE HSI investigation was initiated in 2008. Adeneye indicated that he was engaged in brokering sham marriages between Nigerian nationals and U.S. citizens so that the Nigerians could obtain immigration benefits, ultimately leading to U.S. citizenship. In return, the U.S. citizen "spouses" received cash payments to assist the Nigerians in the deception.

ICE agents made contact with Adeneye by using a confidential informant (CI), who had been previously married to Adeneye, and an undercover agent (UCA) posing as a U.S. citizen willing to engage in a fraudulent marriage. The CI introduced the UCA to Adeneye and Adeneye brokered an agreement between a Nigerian acquaintance and the UCA. A sham marriage was arranged between the UCA and the Nigerian national. Three days after their meeting the UCA engaged in a sham marriage ceremony at the Harris County, Texas, courthouse. County officials were aware of the undercover operation and no actual marriage was entered into by the UCA.

The investigation discovered that Adeneye's own marriage to the CI from 2002 through 2007 was fraudulent, and that the defendant had never lived with his purported spouse. Documents submitted to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in support of the defendant's application for U.S. citizenship, and sworn to by Adeneye, falsely claimed he had been married to and living with the same U.S. citizen spouse for the previous three years.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Douglas Davis and Julie Searle, Southern District of Texas, prosecuted this case.

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