

Florida Man Sentenced for Smuggling Aliens to Work in Florida Resorts

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Justin Eric King, 27, of Chipley, Fla., has been sentenced to 41 months in prison followed by three years supervised release resulting from his conviction on charges of conspiracy to commit visa fraud, visa fraud and conspiracy to commit alien smuggling, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and United States Attorney Gregory R. Miller of the Northern District of Florida announced today.

The defendant and his co-conspirators brought illegal aliens, mostly from Bulgaria and Romania, to work in the hotel industry in and around Destin, Fla. King was sentenced by Senior District Court Judge Lacey A. Collier of Pensacola, Fla.

King's three co-conspirators pleaded guilty and testified against King at trial, which culminated in his conviction on Dec. 3, 2007. The three are natives of the former Soviet Union and have already been sentenced. Anna Czerwien, 57, pleaded guilty to a 12-count information admitting her part in the conspiracy, which began as early as 1999 in Georgia and continued until 2007 in Florida. She was sentenced to 18 months in prison. Aleksander V. Berman, 38, who also began with the conspiracy in 1999, was sentenced to 23 months for his role and Vyacheslave Adol'fovich Finkel (also known as Stan Finkel), 45, was sentenced to 12 months for his part in the scheme. Czerwien, Berman, and Finkel are serving their sentences in U.S. prisons and all conspirators, including King, have agreed to a joint forfeiture of \$1 million.

King became a part of the conspiracy in 2005 and quickly took over the role of negotiating new contracts with hotel owners, communicating with state and federal agencies and broadening the conspiracy. Approximately 72 aliens entered the country under fraudulent visa petitions on which King worked. King harbored another 39 aliens and an additional 1,558 aliens would have entered the United States if additional fraudulent petitions King worked on had been approved.

The indictment resulted from a joint investigation by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, the Department of Labor's Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigation, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Arlene Reidy of the Justice Department's Domestic Security Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tiffany H. Eggers of the Northern District of Florida.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice

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