

Russian Couple Plead Guilty To Fraud Charges In Murder For Hire Plot

By Administrator

Wednesday, 24 March 2021 09:23 -

Leonid Teyf, 59, a Russian national formerly residing in Raleigh, North Carolina, pled guilty today to bribery of a public official, visa fraud, and false statements on a tax return. Tatiana Teyf, 43, pled guilty to a false statement in an immigration matter. In December 2018, Teyf was charged in an indictment with the bribery, murder-for-hire, possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number, harboring illegal aliens, and unlawful use of a visa procured through false claims. Teyf was also charged in a money laundering conspiracy with Tatiana Teyf and others, and several tax charges regarding the wrongful denial of the existence of overseas financial interests and the failure to file required forms in regard to the same overseas accounts. The indictment alleged that between 2010 and 2012, Leonid Teyf received kickbacks of Russian government funds amounting to more than \$150,000,000. The indictment additionally alleged that since December 2010, Leonid and Tatyana Teyf and others opened at least 70 financial accounts at four financial institutions in the names of themselves and businesses under their control and received an approximate total of \$39,500,000 in 294 wire transfers. By December 2018, approximately \$9 million of these funds remained in accounts within the United States and the funds were seized at that time.

The indictment further alleged Teyf knowingly used and possessed a U.S. immigrant visa which he had procured through false claims made on his I-140 application and that he and Tatiana Teyf had harbored and assisted other persons from Russia in coming to and remaining in the United States.

As otherwise alleged in publicly available documents filed in federal court by the Government, during the course of the investigation into the money laundering charges, Leonid Teyf came to believe that Tatiana Teyf was having an affair with another man. Leonid Teyf discussed with an FBI confidential source having the man murdered. Teyf also paid an employee with the United States Department of Homeland Security \$10,000 to find the man and have him deported from the United States. When the deportation plan was taking a longer period of time than he expected, Leonid Teyf returned to the previously discussed murder-for-hire plan and paid the confidential source \$25,000 to kill the man before the end of 2018. To assist in the commission of the murder, Leonid Teyf supplied the confidential source with a firearm on which the serial number had been removed.

Teyf entered a plea of guilty to violations of 18 U.S.C. § 201, the payment of the \$10,000 bribery to the federal official, 18 U.S.C. § 1546, visa fraud, and 26 U.S.C. § 7206(1), filing a false tax return. Tatiana Teyf plead guilty to a separately filed Criminal Information, which charged a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1015(a), making a false statement in an immigration document. Both agreed to forfeit assets in the total amount of \$5,900,241 and Teyf agreed to forfeit the firearm that was provided to the confidential source. He also agreed to be judicially deported once his sentence is complete.

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Pursuant to the plea, the Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina agreed to dismiss the murder-for-hire, firearm, money laundering, harboring illegal aliens, and all but one of the tax charges against Teyf, and to seek a sentence of 60 months' imprisonment for him. Pursuant to Tatiana Teyf's plea to the charge in the Criminal Information, all charges against her in the Indictment will be dismissed and the government will not seek a term of imprisonment.

G. Norman Acker, III, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina made the announcement, noting, "Attempts to subvert U.S. laws through lies and bribery cannot be tolerated. This is particularly true when such attempts are done with the intent of causing greater harm and this office stands ready to pursue these cases with every available tool. Thankfully, through the proactive work of our law enforcement partners, the violence desired was prevented."

U.S. District Judge Louise W. Flanagan accepted the plea. The investigation of this case was conducted by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Raleigh Police Department.