

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 17, 2015

Ex Siu-E Employee Pleads Guilty To Lying To Federal Agents

Kwa Mister, 38, from Fairview Heights, Illinois, pled guilty to an Indictment that charged Making A False Statement to the United States Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, and to the U. S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations, Stephen R. Wigginton, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today.

"There is no right to lie to federal agents conducting an investigation." noted United States Attorney Wigginton. "Federal investigations are serious matters. Lying to Agents conducting the investigations could make you a felon and subject you to time in prison."

Mister faces up to ten years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and up to three years supervised release. Sentencing is set for July 24, 2015.

Facts behind this case showed that the Illinois Department of Transportation entered into an intergovernmental agreement with Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIUE) to be the fiscal agent for the Highway Construction Preparatory Training Program. The indictment charged that Mister was the Director/Project Manager at the Small Business Development Center at SIUE and served as the project manager for the Highway Construction Preparatory Training Program. An investigation and an audit revealed that Mister obtained five contracts between SIUE and Phoenix Support Services for Phoenix Support Services to purportedly serve as an independent consultant to assist with the training program. From March 2010 through January 2011, an audit discovered five Purchase Orders, five Contracts, and at least four Justification for Sole Source Purchase or Contract forms concerning the procurement of services from "L. A. S" [name removed], Director, d/b/a Phoenix Support Services. The procurement of these contracts with Phoenix Support Services was initiated by the Program Manager for the Highway Construction Preparatory Training Program, Mister. Essentially, Mister procured the services of his mother, L. A. S., for sole source contracts and concealed the family relationship and the potential conflict of interest from SIUE. When the propriety of the contracts with Phoenix Support Services was under investigation by SIUE, Mister lied to SIUE as to whether the owner of Phoenix Support Services was his mother. When this was investigated, Mister lied to federal agents concerning whether he provided false information to SIUE.

The successful prosecution is the result of an investigation conducted by the United States Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, the U. S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations and the Federal Bureau of Investigation with the assistance of Southern Illinois University and the Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor. The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Norman R. Smith.