



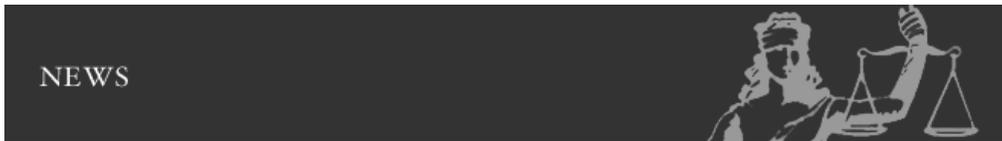
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### Fugitive Chinese Official And Former Wife Named In Grand Jury Indictment Charging Immigration Fraud And Money Laundering

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2015

LOS ANGELES – The ex-wife of a former Chinese official was arrested today in Newcastle, Washington, on charges that she and her former husband fraudulently obtained visas to enter the United States through the immigrant investor program and laundered money to purchase property in Washington state.

Shilan Zhao (趙世蘭), 51, of Newcastle, Washington, and her ex-husband Jianjun Qiao (喬建軍), 51, are charged in a federal grand jury indictment unsealed today with conspiracy to commit immigration fraud and international transport of stolen funds, as well as conspiracy to commit money laundering. Zhao is additionally charged with one count of immigration fraud.

The divorced couple's scheme involved falsely portraying themselves as still married and lying about the source of Zhao's foreign investment, which was required under the EB-5 immigrant investor program to obtain U.S. immigrant visas, according to the indictment. Zhao allegedly stated under oath on documents submitted to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that she had an ownership interest in the companies providing the \$500,000 minimum investment, which investigators later learned she did not.

The indictment also states the divorced couple purchased a residence in the Seattle suburb of Newcastle with laundered money related to fraudulent transactions from a grain storehouse in Zhoukou City, Henan Province, China where Qiao served as director from 1998 to 2011.

As part of the indictment, the federal government is seeking the forfeiture of property obtained through the proceeds of the scheme, including the house in Newcastle, Washington. The indictment also alleges that Qiao engaged in fraudulent grain transactions while serving as the grain storehouse director, and Qiao and Zhao had money transferred out of China, with approximately \$500,000 being used to purchase the Newcastle property.

Zhao appeared this afternoon in federal court in Seattle, Washington, where the indictment was unsealed. At the government's request, Zhao was ordered detained (held without bond) and is scheduled to be back in court in Seattle on Friday.

Qiao remains at large and is being sought by U.S. authorities.

If convicted, Zhao faces statutory maximum sentences of five years in federal prison for the charges of conspiracy to commit international transport of stolen funds and immigration fraud, 10 years for the immigration fraud charge, and 20 years for the money laundering conspiracy charge.

This case is the product of a joint investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, which received assistance from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Investigators also acknowledge the assistance provided by the Supreme People's Procuratorate and Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China.

*An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.*

Release No. 15-028

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