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HOME ABOUT DIVISIONS NEWS OUTREACH & INITIATIVES RESOURCES CAREERS CONTACT

U.S. Attorneys » District of Massachusetts » News

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Thursday, December 12, 2019

Boston Man Charged in Large-Scale Insurance Fraud Scheme

Defendant allegedly took out over \$11.5 million in life insurance on brother who had died years earlier

BOSTON – A Boston man was charged today in connection with a scheme to defraud numerous life insurance companies.

Kellerman Jason Zheng, 33, was arrested and charged with one count of mail fraud and one count of wire fraud. Zheng was detained following an initial appearance in federal court in Boston today.

Between December 2016 and March 2018, Zheng allegedly took out at least 24 life insurance policies in his brother's name. These policies, which carried total coverage limits in excess of \$11.5 million, listed Zheng and his parents as the beneficiaries. The charging documents, however, allege that Zheng's brother died months prior during a visit to China in April 2015. As part of the scheme, Zheng also took steps to make it appear as if his brother were still alive, such as opening and using bank accounts in his brother's name and renewing his brother's Massachusetts driver's license.

Later, Zheng allegedly obtained a false Chinese death certificate, which indicated his brother died in August 2018, and submitted over \$5 million in life insurance claims. Zheng admitted during meetings with an undercover agent, who was posing as a claims manager willing to assist in the fraud scheme, that his brother died prior to the inception of the insurance policies.

The charges of mail and wire fraud each carry a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.



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United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Joseph W. Cronin, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; and Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Office made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jordi de Llano, Deputy Chief of Lelling's Securities and Financial Frauds Unit, is prosecuting the case.

Topic(s):
Financial Fraud

Component(s):
USAO - Massachusetts

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- HOME**
- En Espanol
- ABOUT**
- Meet the U.S. Attorney
- District Organizational Chart
- FAQ
- DIVISIONS**
- Units
- NEWS**
- Press Releases
- OUTREACH & INITIATIVES**
- Events & Trainings
- Civil Rights
- Drug/Violent Crime
- National Security
- Prisoner Reentry
- Project Safe Childhood
- Project Safe Neighborhoods
- Violent Extremism Prevention
- RESOURCES**
- Victim Witness Program
- Daily Court Calendars
- Search Case Information
- Civil and Criminal Debt Repayment
- Guide to Federal Court and Legal Terms
- Business/Vendors
- CAREERS**
- Assistant U.S. Attorneys
- Administrative & Professional Staff
- Internship Program
- CONTACT**

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