

Immigration Lawyer Indicted for Arranging Fake Marriage for Green Card



Summary: A Dallas immigration attorney was indicted for arranging a fake marriage for his assistant.

It was like the plot of *The Proposal*. A man and woman fake a marriage in order to get a green card. But unlike the Ryan Reynolds and Sandra Bullock rom-com, this story didn't have a happy ending. No one ended up falling in love and people involved ended up indicted.

According to *Dallas News*, attorney Bilal Ahmed Khaleeq helped his assistant Amna Cheema fake a marriage in order to get legal status. Amna is a Pakistani national, and in order to help her fool immigration officials, Khaleeq allegedly coached her on how to answer questions.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Dallas said that Khaleeq and Cheema were both charged with conspiracy to commit marriage fraud. They were indicted last week, and if convicted, they both face up to five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. The two have already been released on bond.

"Immigration attorneys risk severe consequences when they choose to illegally profit by breaking U.S. immigration laws rather than building a profession on following those laws," Katrina W. Berger, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations Dallas, said in a statement Wednesday. "HSI and our law enforcement partners will not tolerate immigration fraud — especially by immigration attorneys."

While Khaleeq is being charged with violating federal law, *Dallas News* said that it was unlikely he would receive criminal penalties.

According to officials, Khaleeq, 47, paid an Indian-American to marry Cheema, 37, in May of 2015. Their marriage license was issued in June of that year.

The husband, who was not identified in the case, had asked Khaleeq if he would get into trouble for his part in the scheme, and the immigration attorney allegedly said, "he would not be prosecuted as long as he did not admit culpability," the indictment stated. The husband was given almost \$800 and promised more once Cheema's legal status was approved.

Not only did Khaleeq set up the fake couple, but he also helped them create bank accounts and tax returns that would help them look legitimate. He also had the husband leave clothing at Cheema's home.

Despite the indictment, Khaleeq told *Dallas News* that he is innocent.

"The matter is still pending. I'm going to deny all the allegations in it," Khaleeq said. "They think I helped them commit the fraud, which I did not."

Khaleeq said that his immigration firm employs 31 people and is one of the largest law firms to serve Dallas' Indian and Pakistani community. His firm also handles family and bankruptcy law.

According to *Dallas News*, cases of marriage fraud for legal status is "not common."

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Source: *Dallas News*

What do you think of Bilal Ahmed Khaleeq's alleged actions? Let us know in the comments below.

