



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Cincinnati Field Office *Special Agent in Charge Kathy A. Enstrom*

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OWNER OF LUXURY AUTO SALES PLEADS GUILTY TO MONEY LAUNDERING

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Wael Hasham, 45, of Columbus, Ohio pleaded guilty to one count of money laundering relative to the sale of a vehicle for cash from an illegal source. Hasham faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. In addition, Hasham agreed to forfeit \$288,320.93 in currency.

Benjamin C. Glassman, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office announced the guilty plea entered before Chief U.S. District Judge Edmund A. Sargus, Jr.

According to court documents, since August 2006 Hasham has owned and operated Luxury Auto Sales, LLC. In August 2016 Hasham sold a vehicle to an undercover law enforcement officer who represented that the money being used to purchase the vehicle was the proceeds of the sale of narcotics. Hasham accepted \$25,000 in U.S. currency as payment in full toward the purchase of a 2007 Mercedes Benz purchased by the undercover law enforcement officer. Hasham falsified paperwork related to this transaction to make it appear as though he sold the vehicle to the undercover law enforcement officer for \$12,995 and not for the \$25,000 cash that he actually received. Hasham indicated on the paperwork related to this sale that the undercover law enforcement officer made a \$5,000 cash down payment and was financing the remaining amount via a loan through Luxury Auto Sales, LLC.

Between January 2011 and August 2016 Hasham and/or Luxury Auto Sales, LLC sold at least 30 other vehicles in this same manner. In each instance, Hasham falsified the actual sales price and down payment amount, in addition to creating false loan documents. Hasham took these steps even though in each instance the customer paid for the vehicle in full at the time of the transaction. In a further attempt to conceal and disguise the nature of these transactions, Hasham failed to file IRS Forms 8300 with the government, which he was required to do based on the receipt of more than \$10,000 in cash.

In total, Hasham laundered in excess of \$300,000 in U.S. currency as a result of the sale of these vehicles.

“Mr. Hasham operated a business that provided a safe haven for individuals to purchase vehicles with the ill-gotten gains of their criminal activities and IRS Criminal Investigation stopped him in his tracks,” stated Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office. “One of the government’s most powerful weapons is the ability to seize through asset forfeiture the assets associated with narcotics-related crime and in this case the government has seized a significant portion of

the illegal proceeds.”

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jessica W. Knight and was investigated by special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation.

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