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*From the Los Angeles Times*

## **2 Sherman Oaks lawyers sentenced in visa fraud case**

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March 12, 2008

Two local immigration attorneys were sentenced Monday for filing false employment visa applications for foreign nationals, including more than a dozen who worked at their San Fernando Valley law firm.

Daniel E. Korenberg, 58, of Encino, a founder and senior partner at ASK Law Group in Sherman Oaks, was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison and three years' probation, including six months in home detention with electronic monitoring, authorities said. Korenberg, who had pleaded guilty to two counts of visa fraud and one count of conspiracy, was also fined \$750,000.

Steven James Rodriguez, 41, of Thousand Oaks, a senior associate attorney at the firm, was sentenced to three years' probation, including six months of home detention with electronic monitoring, authorities said. Rodriguez, who had pleaded guilty to one count of making false statements to federal agents, also was ordered by Judge Percy Anderson to serve 200 hours of community service.

Assistant U.S. Atty. Elisa Fernandez, who prosecuted the case, called the sentences appropriate.

"Both serve as a strong signal to all defendants and lawyers that they shall be held to the same standards as any individual when it comes to abiding by the law," Fernandez said after the proceeding at U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

**Between 2000 and 2003, Korenberg and Rodriguez filed fraudulent employment-based visa petitions on behalf of foreign nationals seeking temporary work visas or permanent residency in the United States, according to a 33-count federal indictment.**

**At least 19 of the foreign nationals who benefited from the scheme were employees of the defendants' law firm, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials.**

**Investigators said Korenberg and Rodriguez wrote false job titles and salaries on visa applications, citing jobs that didn't exist. They also lied about the foreigners' work experience.**

H-1B employment visas are limited to foreign workers with at least a bachelor's degree,

and firms must pay foreign workers the prevailing wage. The lawyers filed the fraudulent applications and paid their employees in cash while awaiting approval for the visas, authorities said.

Stanley I. Greenberg, Korenberg's attorney, said he thought his client's sentence was overly harsh.

"I think the facts justify a significantly lesser sentence, but that's up to the judge," he said.

Rodriguez's attorney, Donald M. Re, could not be reached for a comment.

In a related matter, Phillip Abramowitz, 54, of Agoura Hills, another partner at ASK Law Group, is to be sentenced March 24. He pleaded guilty to two counts of visa fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit visa fraud in the case.

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