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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 20, 2015

Lehigh County Couple Convicted In Scheme To Defraud NASA

A federal jury today convicted Yujie Ding, 53, and Yuliya Zotova, 41, of Center Valley, Pennsylvania, of six counts of wire fraud for defrauding NASA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program. U.S. District Court Judge Harvey Bartle III scheduled sentencing hearings for March 2, 2016.

In August 2009 and July 2010, Ding and Zotova submitted proposals to NASA, seeking funding for scientific research. The defendants' proposals claimed that Zotova would serve as principal investigator for research that would be conducted at their business, ArkLight. The defendants' proposals claimed further that Arklight would subcontract some of the work to Lehigh University, where Ding was employed. Instead, the defendants used ArkLight as a front to funnel federal grant money to themselves for research performed by students and others working in Ding's university lab who were not supervised by Zotova. The defendants sent invoices to NASA, via interstate electronic transmissions, for research in which the jury found that ArkLight had not participated.

The case was investigated by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Office of Inspector General, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Elizabeth F. Abrams and Gregory B. David.

USAO - Pennsylvania, Eastern

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