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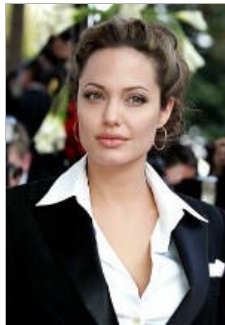
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Angelina Jolie's Adoption Agent Admits Fraud

Thu Jun 24, 2004 03:16 PM ET

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SEATTLE (Reuters) - A Hawaii woman who helped Oscar-winning actress Angelina Jolie adopt a Cambodian boy pleaded guilty on Wednesday to visa fraud and money laundering as part of a ring that paid poor women as little as \$100 for their children, her attorney said.

Lauryn Galindo, 53, and her sister in Seattle, Lynn Devin, received fees of \$10,000 or more to arrange adoptions by U.S. residents of children described as orphans, even though many still had parents, according to the documents.

Devin, who pleaded guilty in December, but has not yet been sentenced, and Galindo have agreed to surrender all property associated with the crimes, including a home in Hawaii and a Jaguar automobile.

Galindo's public defender attorney, Jay Stansell, declined to comment further.

The sisters operated an agency called Seattle International Adoptions, which paired hundreds of children from Cambodia with adoptive parents from 1997 to 2001, when suspicious U.S. immigration authorities halted adoptions from the impoverished Southeast Asian country.

In one instance, Galindo faxed Devin documents with a notation saying "Father dead -- mother very poor -- Kampong Speu," referring to a 4-year-old girl who was with her birth mother in Cambodia, court documents show.

Devin and Galindo then directed the adoptive parents to pay \$100 to the birth mother and paid \$3,500 to the Kampong Speu orphanage, described as "Cambodian ministry clerks, employees or officials" in the plea agreement.

The adoption ring received a total of \$93,700 for the adoptions cited in the case.

Describing children as "abandoned" and misidentifying many of them brought the charges of visa fraud, while financial charges stemmed from efforts to hide the profits in Cambodia and avoid financial reporting of the transactions at a bank in Hawaii.

Galindo could face up to 20 years in prison at a sentencing hearing set for September.

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Prosecutors have said that the investigation will not change the status of children adopted through the Seattle adoption agency.

Jolie, who won a best supporting actress Academy Award in 2000 for her role in "Girl, Interrupted" and more recently starred in "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" and "Life or Something Like It," adopted her Cambodian-born son, Maddox, last year after meeting him in an orphanage in November 2001.

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