



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**John E. Murphy, U.S. Attorney**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

On the web: [www.usdoj.gov/usao/twx/index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/twx/index.html)

Daryl Fields, Public Information Officer  
(210) 384-7440

September 21, 2011

**JURY CONVICTS ROWLETT CAR DEALER IN TITLE WASHING SCHEME**

**United States Attorney John E. Murphy** announced that in San Antonio this afternoon, a federal jury convicted 49-year-old car dealer Jerry Edward Weaver of Rowlett, Texas, for his role in a vehicle title washing scheme.

"Title washing" is the fraudulent process through which a vehicle's title is corruptly altered to conceal information that should normally be contained on the title, such as a previous salvaged title or a financial lienholder. A vehicle that has a "certificate of destruction," "non-repairable" history or "parts only" history can only be utilized for parts or scrap metal, and can never receive a clean title.

Evidence presented during trial revealed that between June 2009 and October 2010, Weaver, co-defendant Babauk Omeed Harizavi of San Antonio, and others were involved in a scheme to defraud, by requesting and filing fraudulent paperwork with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, to seek clean Texas vehicle titles using the mechanic's lien process. Upon receipt of the clean Texas vehicle titles, the defendants sold those vehicles to unsuspecting consumers or third parties without disclosing the past "certificate of destruction," "salvage title," or "parts only" title histories of those vehicles. Weaver, Harizavi and their co-defendants are collectively responsible for 613 fraudulently obtained Texas vehicle titles issued by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles based on fraudulently filed mechanic's liens.

Testimony revealed that while operating a company in San Antonio, Harizavi exploited the mechanic's lien process by creating and filing fraudulent mechanic's lien paperwork with the Bexar County Tax Assessor Collector's office. Harizavi advertised his title washing business on the internet. In open court, Harizavi admitted to creating and filing fraudulent mechanic's lien paperwork for a Chevrolet Uplander that had been purchased by Weaver from a General Services Administration (GSA) car auction. The Uplander had a "Parts Only- Not for Highway Use- Salvage" rating on its title. After Harizavi filed the fraudulent mechanic's lien paperwork, a clean vehicle title was issued and mailed to Weaver with no reference to the salvage rating. Harizavi admitted that he knew that Weaver intended on selling the vehicle with the clean Texas title.

Specifically, the jury convicted Weaver of two counts of mail fraud. The jury found that Weaver knowingly received by mail two Texas vehicle titles--fraudulently obtained by Harizavi using the mechanic's lien process--one for the Chevrolet Uplander on April 22, 2010; the other, for a Pontiac G6 on June 21, 2010. Weaver faces up to 20 years in federal prison per count. Sentencing is tentatively scheduled for the week of January 9, 2012.

Co-defendants Babauk Omeed Harizavi of San Antonio, Hassane Mahmoud Kobeissi, of Swedesboro, New Jersey, Daniel Thomas Bass, of San Antonio, Texas, and Jayeshkum C. Patel, of Sayerville, New Jersey, have previously pleaded guilty to mail fraud. Hassane Mahmoud Kobeissi also pleaded guilty to smuggling goods from the U.S.

Operation Title Sweep was initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in San Antonio, Texas Department of Public Safety, United States Postal Service and the National Insurance Crime Bureau. Also assisting in the investigation were the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Inspector General - General Services Administration. Also providing assistance to the investigation was the Hartford Insurance Agency. Assistant United States Attorneys Sarah Wannarka and Thomas P. Moore are prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

#####