

TEMECULA: Two accused of multimillion-dollar money laundering scheme

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12/17/2014



Dr. Donald Woo Lee, 49, of Newport Beach, left, and Sammy Ciling, 49, of Temecula are charged with multiple counts of grand theft and money laundering in connection with a multimillion-dollar commercial loan scam, authorities said.

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December 17, 2014 at 7:48 pm

A Temecula man who runs medical imaging businesses and a Newport Beach doctor who works in Southwest Riverside County have been charged in connection with a multimillion-dollar scheme involving fraudulent commercial loans, authorities said.

Dr. Donald Woo Lee, 49, of Newport Beach, was arrested Wednesday in Corona and Sammy Ciling, 49, of Temecula, was taken into custody Tuesday in Fallbrook. They are each charged with 55 felony counts, including money laundering and grand theft, court records show. They were being held with bail set at \$3.5 million each.

Two other men wanted in the case had yet to be arrested Wednesday, prosecutors said.

Ciling is set for arraignment on Thursday in Riverside and Lee on Friday at the Southwest Justice Center in French Valley.

Dr. Lee operates Prime Partners Medical Group in the Temecula area, according to a news release from the Riverside County District Attorney's Office. Ciling owns several medical imaging businesses in Riverside, San Diego

and Los Angeles counties.

Prosecutors said Lee and Ciling, beginning around 2009 and continuing through 2011, fraudulently obtained several commercial loans from various financial institutions to purchase medical imaging equipment. The loans totaled more than \$3 million, court records say.

A lengthy arrest warrant declaration filed by District Attorney's Office Investigator Paul Edwards describes a tangled series of loan agreements, equipment purchases, money transfers, payments and defaults.

In one case, a portion of money borrowed to purchase medical imaging devices was used to repay the owner of a trucking and equipment company Cilling owed money to, court records say.

The funds also were used to buy two MRI machines, but rather than installing the machines at the Temecula location stipulated in the loan agreement, they were taken to imaging centers in Fallbrook and Lake Elsinore, the investigator wrote.

As a result, when Lee defaulted on the loan, the bank was legally unable to repossess the equipment, court records say.

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