May 23, 2022

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Secures More Than $20 Million Judgment and a Lifetime Industry Ban in Trial Against Deceptive Moving Businesses



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody obtained a lifetime ban and a final judgment of more than $20 million in a trial against a wide-ranging, deceptive moving scheme. Ohad Guzi owned eight Florida moving companies, mainly operated under the following company names: All USA Van Lines Inc., Moving Group, Inc., Top Movers, Inc., Guzi's Investments, LLC, Cross Country Movers, LLC, 24/7 Moving Services, Inc. and Emoving Company.

The defendants falsely advertised the companies as professional, cross-country moving services performed by well-trained employees in company-owned trucks, when in fact, untrained contractors using rented box trucks provided the moving services, and the delivery services were outsourced to third parties unknown to the consumer. The defendants guaranteed prices to consumers, only to then drastically raise prices on moving day after loading possessions onto trucks. Consumers often had to wait many weeks past the promised delivery date to receive belongings. To further the scheme, the businesses used many fictitious names that appeared deceptively similar to widely known national moving companies. Guzi personally used at least six different aliases.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This wide-ranging, deceptive moving scheme victimized people all over the United States, including many here in Florida, by adding excessive charges to the quoted price, advertising professional moving services that the movers did not provide, falsely promising secure handling of household goods and hiding bad reviews by using a variety of misleading company names. I am grateful to my Consumer Protection team for putting a stop to these outrageous practices and holding moving companies accountable."

After a week-long trial, Circuit Judge Carol-Lisa Phillips in Broward County found the defendants engaged in many deceptive practices, including the following:

- Providing a low-ball estimate to then increase the price significantly on the day of the move;
- Establishing delivery dates with no intention to deliver the goods within the given dates;
- Utilizing third-party delivery services despite promising consumers that the entire move would be done by the company's own employees;
- Failing to provide promised load and unload services;
- Employing unskilled, unqualified or untrained movers;
- Making use of rented box trucks and day labor instead of the promised owned trucks and professional services;
- Misleading consumers about insurance coverage and the claims process;
- Cutting off or severely decreasing communication with consumers after approximately 70% of the amount due was paid and the Guzi enterprise, or a third party, controlled a consumer's property; and
- Using a web of interrelated companies and Department of Transportation numbers designed to hide identities of Guzi's enterprises.

The court's final judgment against the defendants sends a clear message that this type of misconduct in the moving industry will not be tolerated. The judgment imposes a permanent ban against Guzi and affiliated businesses from engaging in any moving-related services in Florida and awards more than $21.7 million in monetary relief, including more than $5 million for consumer restitution and $16.5 million in penalties for violations of the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act, the Florida Moving Act and federal law governing interstate movers.

The defendants operated using fictitious names that include, among others: Interstate Movers and Moving Group; Interstate Movers; Nationwide Movers System, Affordable Movers, Dispatch My Move; Moving Group System, USA Movers-Interstate Movers; United Moving & Relocation; Affordable Movers, Cross Country Movers, Long Distance Movers, Household Van Lines, Nationwide Movers-Long Distance Movers, Nationwide Moving Services-Long Distance Movers and Nationwide Moving Services.

Trial attorneys for Attorney General Moody's office for this case include Assistant Attorneys General Sasha Funk Granai, Ellen Lyons, Jennifer Pinder and Carol DeGraffenreidt. The following agencies assisted the Attorney General's Office in this matter: the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which regulates household goods moving carriers at the federal level, the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which regulates intrastate moves, and the Better Business Bureau.

To read the trial order and final judgment, click here.