

Investigators to get Award for Year Long Insurance Fraud Investigation

The International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) has awarded this year's "Insurance Investigator of the Year" designation to Det. Lt. John Cummings and Trooper Corey Mackey, both Massachusetts State Police assigned to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office; and First Assistant District Attorney Steven E. Gagne, along with two New York City Police detectives and investigators with the Insurance Fraud Bureau of Massachusetts.

The award will be presented by Anthony M. DiPaolo, Chief of Investigations for IFB of Massachusetts at the Northwestern District Attorney's Office, at 1 Gleason Plaza in Northampton on Monday, Nov. 23 at 11 a.m.

This award was created in 2014 by the IAATI, to recognize an individual or group for an "outstanding contribution in the area of vehicle theft investigation or insurance fraud investigation."

Cummings and Mackey were the lead investigators from the Massachusetts State Police who, between 2013-2014, investigated and ultimately helped dismantle an insurance fraud scheme believed to be the biggest car insurance fraud operation in Western Massachusetts history. In August 2014, Taiwan native Le Fen "Helen" Chen pleaded guilty to more than 100 insurance fraud charges. Chen accompanied car owners from New York to insurance agencies in Western Massachusetts, where she vouched for the insurance applications they filed with false addresses in Northampton, Greenfield and Easthampton. More than 40 others were also charged in the scheme.

In nominating the investigators for the award, DiPaolo

characterized the investigation as “a benchmark insurance fraud investigation.”

The investigation was the result of a referral made by the Plymouth Rock Assurance Company to the Insurance Fraud Bureau of Massachusetts (IFB) involving a car accident in New York, which was discovered to involve an operator who lived in New York but had illegally registered and insured the vehicle in Massachusetts. After initial investigation, the IFB was joined by the Northwestern District Attorney’s Office, who in turn solicited the assistance of the Massachusetts State Police, Department of Homeland Security and the New York City Police Department.

“As the result of this multi-agency collaboration, a total of 48 individuals were charged with over 300 counts of insurance fraud, perjury and conspiracy. This investigation involved many different agencies and went beyond state lines, setting a new benchmark. This success is a direct result of the professionalism and dedication of the individuals involved,” DiPaolo said.
