

Glendale man gets 8 years in trademark scam case

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LOS ANGELES >> A Glendale man who masterminded a \$1.66 million mass-mailing scam targeting trademark applicants was sentenced Monday to eight years in federal prison.

Artashes Darbinyan was also ordered by U.S. District Judge Stephen V. Wilson to serve three years in supervised release following his release from prison and pay a share of nearly \$1.6 million in restitution.

Prosecutors had recommended that Wilson impose a penalty of more than 15 years, but the defense successfully argued that the 37-year-old defendant had suffered from years of alcohol and drug addiction which led to the criminal activity.

“He’s a good guy with substance abuse problems,” defense attorney Lara Yeretsian said outside court. “We are happy that the court exercised the discretion it had by sentencing Mr. Darbinyan to half of the low end of the guideline range and half of what the prosecution had recommended.”

Darbinyan pleaded guilty in December in downtown Los Angeles to mail fraud and money laundering charges.

The scam operated from 2013 to 2015 when Darbinyan, using mass mailings from bogus companies called the Trademark Compliance Office and the Trademark Compliance Center, offered trademark registration and monitoring services to trademark holders who had recently registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

For a \$385 fee, the companies promised to monitor for possible infringement and send reports to the client. Instead, Darbinyan opened bogus accounts, in which he and a co-defendant deposited or cashed checks sent by the trademark holders.

In a letter to the court, Darbinyan apologized “to all of the people that I have deceived.”