

Brothers sentenced for £1.48 million electronic waste fraud

Brothers Jamil and Saleem Rehman received custodial sentences at Birmingham Crown Court (Thursday 19 December) following an Environment Agency prosecution into a £1.48 million fraud case involving electronic waste.

Jamil Rehman, aged 56 of Monkspath, Solihull, was sentenced to 5 years and 4 months in custody while his brother Saleem, aged 55 of Shirley, Solihull, received a 16 month custodial sentence suspended for 2 years.

Between January 2011 and December 2012, Jamil Rehman, who was the sole director at Electronic Waste Specialists Ltd (EWS), submitted fictitious claims for the recycling of approximately 10,600 tonnes of electronic waste with the company receiving payment to the value of £1.48 million from a producer compliance scheme, Weelight Ltd.

EWS's services were contracted by Weelight Ltd as an approved authorised treatment facility. The company created forged paperwork which detailed fictitious recycling.

The fraud came to light when the Environment Agency's National Investigations Team became suspicious of the paperwork that EWS, which operated out of a warehouse in Devon Street, Nechells, Birmingham, had submitted.

At a hearing on 23 January 2019, Jamil Rehman pleaded guilty to 1 charge of fraudulent trading. On the same date, Saleem Rehman pleaded guilty to a charge of theft from the company.

At a hearing on 19 December 2019, Jamil Rehman was sentenced to 5 years and 4 months in custody and disqualified from acting as a company director for 10 years. Saleem Rehman received a 16 month custodial sentence suspended for 2 years.

During the proceedings, the Environment Agency undertook a surveillance operation in relation to Jamil Rehman as he asserted he was not fit to plead.

Video evidence was obtained that showed him driving. In addition, further evidence was obtained showing that he had hired HGV vehicles in 2018 and 2019.

Jamil Rehman applied to vacate his plea but there was inadequate defence medical evidence to support the application.

His brother, Saleem, the court heard, stole approximately £36,000 from the company account, spending the money on foreign travel, school fees and car hire.

EWS Ltd went into voluntary liquidation in 2014 with debts of over £116,000.

Speaking after the case, the Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation, said:

The Environment Agency has a specialist crime unit using intelligence to track and prosecute organised crime groups involved in illegal waste activity.

This case sends out a clear message that we will not hesitate to take action against anyone operating illegally.

Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per annum from legitimate business and the treasury. Since April 2011 the Environment Agency has invested £65.2 million in tackling it.

Waste companies, local authorities and businesses all have a responsibility to check what happens to their waste. If you suspect that a company is doing something wrong, you can call the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.