

Four Brazilians from Connecticut sentenced for trying to get licenses in Tennessee

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GREENEVILLE, Tenn. -- Four men with Brazilian passports have been sentenced by a federal court after they pleaded guilty in a scheme to try to get Tennessee driver's licenses with fake documents.

Sergio Soares Dos Santos, Fernando Do Nascimento, Eri Gomes De Oliveira and Janio Gomes Alves, were arrested March 21 after police investigating a suspicious vehicle discovered the car they were driving did not match the Connecticut license plate on the vehicle.

Police found Brazilian passports for each of the men in the car and multiple copies of a phone bill for a fake Knoxville address that separately listed Nascimento, Oliveira and Alves as the phone customers.

Santos told authorities he altered phone bills to establish Tennessee residency for the other men and drove them to East Tennessee from Danbury, Conn., to help them get driver's licenses, according to an affidavit from FBI special agent Peter O'Hare.

Oliveira reportedly told the agent he "has many friends who have traveled to Tennessee to obtain drivers licenses."

Tennessee law requires a driver's license identification applicant to show two proofs of identification and two proofs of Tennessee residency, such as a utility bill. Applicants without a Social Security number - most often legal and illegal immigrants - must provide a birth certificate issued in the U.S. or federal immigration documentation.

Santos, Nascimento and Alves pleaded guilty to conspiracy.

Santos, 38, was sentenced to 8 months in federal prison and three years probation.

Nascimento, 22, was sentenced to 136 days in jail already served and three years probation. Both men will be deported.

Alves, 24, was sentenced to 53 days in jail already served and three years probation.

Oliveira, 50, pleaded guilty to unlawful entry into the United States and was sentenced to 136 days in jail already served.

Alves and Oliveira also could be deported.