

## **Two arrested Sept. 12 charged in credit card scam**

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*The Star-Ledger*

December 14, 2001 Friday

THE DETAINEES Two former Newark newsstand operators arrested in Texas the day after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center were charged yesterday with being involved in a scheme to steal almost half a million dollars through credit card fraud.

Mohammed Jaweed Azmath and Ayub Ali Khan, roommates in a Jersey City apartment and co-workers at a newsstand in Newark's Penn Station, are accused of selling an unidentified third man identification cards and numerous credit cards, then helping that man run up huge, unpaid balances on the cards, according to documents filed in U.S. District Court in New York.

Azmath and Khan attracted national attention amid speculation they may have had a role in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks or in other, future terrorist actions. But the complaint unsealed yesterday makes no mention of the attacks. It does say one of the bank accounts used had been opened at the Citibank branch on the Trade Center concourse.

"The terror case is over and done with; it's fading away," said Lawrence Feitell, attorney for Khan. "And all that's left is the residue of this credit card case."

Both men, who emigrated from India, remain in federal custody while officials determine if they were in this country legally. Khan had agreed to be deported to his homeland, but the charge enables prosecutors to keep the two men jailed for up to 30 days, or until a grand jury decides whether or not to indict them.

The complaint says Khan's real name is Syed Gul Mohammed Shah. It also notes both men were interviewed repeatedly by federal agents, and says both changed the accounts of the credit card scheme they had given agents during their first interviews on the topic Sept. 22.

According to the complaint, Azmath told agents he was paid \$7,000 to \$8,000 to sell a third man his Social Security card and New Jersey non-driver's identification card. That man later used a credit card created in the name "Azmath Jaweed" to buy Azmath pants and shoes, and Azmath knew the third man would not pay the bill, the complaint says.

Khan told investigators he sold the same man 15 credit cards, for between \$1,000 and \$2,000 apiece.

Investigators reported finding 11 different credit cards issued to "Azmath Jaweed" and another 20 cards in Khan's name. Together, the cards had unpaid balances totaling \$473,000, the complaint states.

According to the complaint, Azmath and Khan were carrying \$5,588 in cash when they were arrested on an Amtrak train in Texas Sept. 12. The two were flying from Newark to San Antonio, Texas, on Sept. 11 when their flight was diverted to St. Louis in the wake of the terrorist hijackings. They continued their trip by train the next day.

Muhammad Aslam Pervez, another roommate of Azmath and Khan at 6 Tonnele Ave., Jersey City, has been charged with lying to investigators about more than \$100,000 in cash that moved through checking accounts he controlled.

Feitell said he did not know who the third man alleged to be involved in the credit card scam might be, and specifically said he did not know if it was Pervez.

He said he hoped to be able to seek bail for Khan within a few days.

Feitell declined to speculate why Jason Horowitz, the FBI special agent who compiled the complaint against the pair, pointed out that one bank account had been opened at the World Trade Center.

"I think it's a happenstance," he said.