



Inside ICE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**3 ICE Deports
Egyptian Linked
To '93 WTC Bombing**

3 ICE Most Wanted

**3 ICE Budget Gains
6.3 Percent In FY 06
DHS Spending Bill**

**4 ICE Plays Key Role In
Secure Border Initiative**

**4 ICE Arrests 106 Illegal
Workers At Washington
Warehouses**

**5 Operator Of National
Sex Business Pleads
Guilty To Obscenity,
Tax Charges**

**5 Close Cooperation
Between ICE, State
Leads To Arrest Of
N.J. Gang Member**

**5 Four Charged In
Scheme To Sell
30,000 Counterfeit
Luxury Items**

**6 ICE Thanks
Von Amelunxen
Foundation**



ICE agents stand guard November 9 outside one of five Arizona motels linked to an investigation of a human smuggling organization.

Combined Authorities Increase ICE Effectiveness In Law Enforcement

On November 9, ICE agents arrested 12 persons in Arizona after a nine-month undercover investigation targeting members of the motel industry who were supporting violent human smuggling organizations. Federal authorities will also seek forfeiture of five motels. The case is the latest example of how ICE, by combining its legacy customs and immigration authorities, is forging its reputation as a new and powerful law enforcement agency.

Finding motels used as staging points and drop houses by smuggling organizations is not new. Legacy INS frequently encountered such tactics in its investigations into human smuggling organizations. What is new is that ICE has the ability to use the authorities from legacy U.S. Customs to follow the money trail linked to human smuggling activities, and to find and seize the financial assets related to or earned from those crimes.

In the Arizona case, ICE agents with expertise in human smuggling worked to build a case against the smuggling organization while ICE agents specializing in financial investigations were able to develop criminal cases against the motel owners and forfeiture cases against their properties. The criminal indictments allege that the motels were used to facilitate human smuggling and to harbor illegal aliens. The total value of the motels could be as high as \$7.2 million. This is believed to be one of the first cases in which ICE agents have used the financial forfeiture provisions of federal law against motels in a human smuggling investigation.

While the logic of combining authorities is obvious, it wasn't always this way. Before 2003, the former INS used its long-standing immigration expertise primarily to bring immigration-related charges against human

Continued on Page 2

Combined Authorities Increase ICE's Impact



ICE agents search the office of a motel linked to a human smuggling organization in Arizona. Twelve persons were arrested in the operation, which used ICE's combined authorities to target the smuggling group and the motels used as "drop houses" by the smugglers.

Continued from Page 1

smuggling organizations. The former U.S. Customs Service used its long-standing financial investigative expertise primarily against drug trafficking organizations. But these agencies rarely collaborated in targeting human trafficking or smuggling organizations.

Today, ICE has combined the criminal investigators from the former Customs Service and INS, and those agents are now applying their immigration and financial investigative authorities jointly in a coordinated campaign. For the first time, these criminal organizations are seeing both their smuggling operations and their illegal profits and financial infrastructures targeted by U.S. investigators. Perhaps the single most effective tool in immigration law enforcement to emerge from combining the investigative authorities has been the application of financial investigations to target criminal organizations involved in immigration law violations.

Since the creation of ICE in March 2003, ICE investigations into human smuggling and trafficking organizations have resulted in approximately 5,460 criminal arrests, 2,880 criminal indictments and 2,358 convictions. All the while, the number of ICE investigations launched against human smuggling and trafficking organizations has steadily increased—from 2,564 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 to 3,348 in FY 2005.

At the same time, ICE has begun applying its financial expertise in order to target the illicit proceeds of these criminal organizations. As a result, the amount of assets seized in these immigration-related cases has dramatically increased—from roughly zero before ICE was created to \$7.7 million during FY 2004 and \$26.8 million in FY 2005. ■

ICE Combined Authority Cases

ICE's use of combined authorities has been substantial and widespread. Recent cases that illustrate the impact created by ICE's combined authorities include:

- On September 29, a Texas man and his employment firm, the Great Texas Employment Agency, were found guilty of money laundering and conspiracy to transport thousands of illegal aliens. Yu Wei Shan, 51, and his company transported more than 6,000 illegal aliens to Asian restaurants throughout the Midwest and laundered the illegal proceeds reaped from this operation.
- On September 13, Pavel Preus, 39, a Polish national and resident of Pompano Beach, Fla., pleaded guilty to numerous charges, including conspiracy to launder more than \$20 million, in connection with a nationwide illegal employee leasing conspiracy. Beginning in 1995, Preus conspired to provide hundreds of illegal aliens, mostly Eastern Europeans, to American companies.
- On August 12, Horacio Golfarini, 43, a native of Uruguay, pleaded guilty in Houston to conspiring with an immigration attorney and others to launder funds earned through an international visa scam. Golfarini and three others were indicted in an ICE investigation that showed defendants filed bogus immigration petitions to create the illusion that there was affiliation between certain Chinese and U.S. companies.
- On August 11, a federal grand jury in Boston indicted Mario Viana, 39, and Julio Viana, 37, for operating an illegal money transmittal business. Mario Viana was also charged with four counts of alien smuggling. In addition, Julio Viana was charged with thirteen counts of structuring financial transactions to avoid federal law.
- On July 20, ICE agents announced that Pedro Castorena-Ibarra, 42, of Guadalajara, Mexico, was indicted in Denver for masterminding an international criminal organization responsible for the illegal production and distribution of counterfeit identification documents in cities throughout the United States. Castorena-Ibarra remains a fugitive from justice.
- On July 1, a federal grand jury in Los Angeles handed down indictments charging 24 persons for their role in a sophisticated human smuggling scheme that brought hundreds of South Korean women into the United States to work as prostitutes at brothels. The indictments charge the suspects with conspiracy to import aliens to the United States for prostitution; transporting illegal aliens; and harboring and concealing illegal aliens. In addition, the indictment charges several brothel operators with money laundering and illegal monetary transactions.

Inside ICE is an e-newsletter produced by the ICE Office of Public Affairs to inform the public about the mission, operations and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

ICE Deports Egyptian Linked To '93 WTC Bombing

WASHINGTON, D.C.—ICE officers have deported Mohammed Abouhalima, a 41-year-old Egyptian national who was convicted as an accessory after the fact for helping a 1993 World Trade Center bomber escape the United States following the attack.

Abouhalima, who resided in New York City prior to his conviction, was removed October 25 under escort by Philadelphia-based ICE deportation officers and arrived in Cairo, Egypt the following day.

“This individual endangered the national security of the United States by helping a terrorist flee after a vicious attack on our country,” said ICE Director of the Office of Detention and Removal Operations John P. Torres. “His criminal conviction gives him no legal right to remain in this country and ICE removed him expeditiously.”

Abouhalima was convicted in December 1998 and served an eight-year prison term (with credit for time served prior to conviction). He was

convicted for helping his brother, Mahmoud, flee New York to Saudi Arabia following the Feb. 26, 1993 terrorist attack that killed six people and



Mohammed Abouhalima

wounded more than 1,000. His brother was later extradited to the U.S. and sentenced to 240 years confinement with no chance of parole. ■

ICE Budget Gains 6.3 Percent In FY 06 DHS Spending Bill

President Bush signed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Homeland Security Appropriations Act on October 19. The legislation adopts many of the changes called for in the Secretary’s Second Stage Review and provides a total of \$3.9 billion in direct appropriations and fees for ICE. That figure is an increase of \$216.218 million or 6.3 percent above FY 2005.

Included in the FY 06 enhancements for ICE are:

- \$35 million in additional funding for the annualization of the FY 05 Supplemental Appropriation.

- \$205 million in additional funding for base fixes.
- \$5 million in additional funding for Visa Security Program expansion.
- \$39.3 million in additional funding for Arizona Border Control/Interior Repatriation.
- \$43.7 million in additional funding for Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) activities.
- \$42 million for an additional 250 Criminal Investigators.
- \$9 million for an additional 67 Immigration Enforcement Agents.

- \$800,000 in additional funding for the Cyber Crimes Center.
- \$1 million in additional funding for the Law Enforcement Support Center.
- \$10 million in additional funding for Worksite Enforcement.
- \$5.4 million in additional funding for Alternatives to Detention.
- \$8.9 million in additional funding for Fugitive Operations.
- \$16 million for an additional 60 Fugitive Operations team members.
- \$5.4 million in additional funding for Institutional Removal.
- \$90 million for an additional 1,920 bed spaces.
- \$18 million for an additional 100 Institutional Removal Program agents.
- \$10 million for an additional 49 Alternatives to Detention positions.

The DHS FY 2006 appropriations include more than \$30.8 billion in net discretionary spending—a 4.7 percent increase over FY 2005. In total, with mandatory and fee-based programs, the DHS budget for FY 2006 is \$40.6 billion. ■

ICE MOST WANTED

This Week’s Featured Fugitive: **Luis Montiel-Cercas**



ALIASES: Unknown **HEIGHT:** 5’7”

DATE OF BIRTH: 01/20/1978 **WEIGHT:** 165 lbs.

PLACE OF BIRTH: Honey, Puebla, Mexico **HAIR:** Black

SCARS/MARKS: Unknown **EYES:** Brown

LAST KNOWN WHEREABOUTS: Ciudad Acuna, Mexico

BACKGROUND: Luis MONTIEL-Cercas is wanted for questioning by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in connection with the May 2001 smuggling attempt that resulted in the death of 14 illegal aliens south of Welton, Arizona.

If you have any information on the whereabouts of the above fugitive, please call **1-866-DHS-2ICE**

View more ICE Most Wanted online at: www.ice.gov/graphics/investigations/wanted/

ICE Plays Key Role In Secure Border Initiative

ICE will play a key role in the Secure Border Initiative (SBI) unveiled November 2 by DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, who called the program “an ambitious effort to address a serious threat to our nation’s security—the continual influx of illegal migrants across our borders.”

In a message to all DHS employees, Chertoff said the SBI provides a comprehensive view of immigration that aims for nothing less than to gain full control of the nation’s borders. Chertoff said the SBI is built on a

foundation of border security, interior enforcement and a temporary worker program, and SBI will completely eliminate the “catch and release” style of border enforcement by re-engineering the ICE detention and removal process.

“By increasing detention space and minimizing the time that aliens spend in our custody,” Chertoff said, “we will transform border enforcement into a ‘catch and remove’ program.”

Chertoff said that almost 2,500 new ICE and CBP

officers will be hired as a result of the initiative. He said SBI, in addition to border operations, would also focus on interior enforcement, strengthening efforts to combat document fraud and monitor the worksite to ensure that employers who violate the law are punished. Beyond the border and the workplace, SBI will expand ICE’s fugitive operations program, and develop a robust ICE criminal alien program that will target and remove foreign-born illegal aliens incarcerated in federal and state jails.

“SBI is a team effort that will require the collective energy of the entire department,” Chertoff said. “Congress already has provided us with the resources in our FY 2006 appropriations to start moving forward with this important priority. Your continued dedication and support of the SBI will result in a safer and more secure America.”

For more specific details on the SBI, check out the DHS SBI Fact Sheet, posted on DHS Online at <https://dhsonline.dhs.gov>. ■

ICE Arrests 106 Illegal Workers At Washington Warehouses

SEATTLE—ICE agents served a federal civil warrant at a worksite near Seattle November 2 and arrested 106 aliens believed to be working in the United States without authorization.

The operation occurred at bonded warehouses operated by Regal Logistics Corp. in Fife, Wash. Regal Logistics provides storage space for customs “in-bond” merchandise entering the United States from abroad.

The workers were identified after ICE agents audited recent hiring records of Phoenix Staffing, LLC, and found discrepancies leading agents to believe that a number of the company’s employees may not have been authorized to work in the United States.

Phoenix Staffing is a temporary employment agency used by Regal Logistics.

ICE agents say it appears that many of the illegal workers used counterfeit identity documents to obtain their jobs. The majority of the unauthorized employees are from Mexico.

This operation is part of ICE’s worksite enforcement efforts focusing on businesses with ties to security sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities—including airports, military bases, customs “in-bond” warehouses and bio-agriculture industries. Unauthorized workers with access to such sites are vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers or other criminals. Regal Logistics’ bonded

facilities are located close to the area’s major seaports, rail yards, and international airports.

“Addressing security vulnerabilities that pose a potential threat to our nation’s vital infrastructure is a crucial part of ICE’s enforcement strategy,” said Leigh Winchell, special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in Seattle. “When someone uses fraud or false documents to gain access to a major cargo hub like the Seattle-Tacoma area, we have no way of knowing who they really are or what their motives might be.”

To aid employers, U.S. Citizenship and



ICE agents escort some of the 105 aliens arrested near Seattle, Wash. The aliens, mostly Mexican nationals, are suspected of working illegally in the United States.

Immigration Services operates the Basic Pilot Program, a Web-based system that enables businesses to verify the employment eligibility of newly hired workers. Nationwide, there are more than 20,000 hiring sites using the Basic Pilot Program. Interested employers are urged to call the agency’s toll-free number at 888-464-4218 to obtain more information. ■

Operator Of National Sex Business Pleads Guilty To Obscenity, Tax Charges

WASHINGTON, D.C.— A man from Littleton, Colo. who oversaw a nationwide obscenity enterprise called Goalie Entertainment Holdings, Inc. pleaded guilty November 3 in Dallas for various federal obscenity and tax violations.

Edward J. Wedelstedt of Littleton agreed to forfeit his properties and commercial enterprises in Texas, in addition to the \$1.25 million that he has already forfeited to the U.S. government. The guilty plea was the result of an extensive investigation by ICE and the Internal Revenue Service that began in 1998 and resulted in indictments against numerous other

defendants in connection with this operation.

Wedelstedt pleaded guilty to transporting obscene matters for sale or distribution and engaging in a conspiracy to defraud the United States.

Alonso Pena, special agent-in-charge of ICE Investigations in San Antonio said, “This guilty plea exemplifies a true team effort among many law enforcement agencies. Our coordinated pursuit and investigative expertise in criminal interstate trafficking and tax fraud uncovered the individuals who distributed obscene material while engaging in federal tax crimes related to their illicit profits.” ■

Cooperation Between ICE, State Dept. Leads To Arrest Of N.J. Gang Member

NEWARK, N.J.—ICE agents in New Jersey have arrested a 19-year-old member of the notorious Salvadorian 18th Street Gang in a case that highlights the close cooperation between ICE and the U.S. Department of State.

Dennis Amilcar Terezon-Zepeda was captured last week in Newark. Last summer, in El Salvador, Terezon-Zepeda applied for an immigrant visa to enter the United States, but was denied by the State Department due to his gang affiliation.

The State Department informed the ICE Attaché Office in San Salvador of Terezon-Zepeda’s failed application, raising the

possibility that he would attempt to enter the country illegally and go to New Jersey. Acting on that information, ICE agents from the Newark office were able to locate Terezon-Zepeda at the house of a family member and arrest him. Terezon-Zepeda has been placed in removal proceedings and will be held in custody pending his hearing in immigration court.

The arrest of Terezon-Zepeda is part of Operation Community Shield, launched by ICE in March 2005 as a comprehensive law enforcement initiative targeting the violent criminal street gang Mara Salvatrucha, also known as MS-13. ■

Four Charged In Scheme To Sell 30,000 Counterfeit Luxury Items

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Four Massachusetts residents were charged November 3 in federal court with money laundering and trafficking and conspiring to traffic in more than \$1.4 million of counterfeit luxury handbags and wallets, as well as the materials needed to make these counterfeits.

Those arrested were Katherine Luong, age 26, of Chelsea; Camphung Luong, age 24, of Chelsea; Kim Luong, age 22, of Quincy and Minh Vu, age 25, of Chelsea. They have been charged in a 10-count indictment with conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit

goods, conspiracy to commit money laundering and a variety of counts alleging specific instances of trafficking in counterfeit goods and money laundering.

ICE worked with the Internal Revenue Service on the case, which is being prosecuted by U.S. Attorney Michael J. Sullivan of the District of Massachusetts.

The indictment charges that the Luong sisters and Vu, Katherine Luong’s boyfriend, used thirteen self-storage units at a facility in Revere, Mass., as their counterfeiting operation’s home base. When raided by law enforcement

officers earlier this year, the units held approximately 12,231 counterfeit handbags; 7,651 counterfeit wallets; more than 17,000 generic handbags and wallets and enough counterfeit labels and medallions to turn more than 50,000 generic handbags and wallets into counterfeits. These items copied Louis Vuitton, Kate Spade, Prada, Gucci, Fendi, Burberry and Coach trademarks, but were of lower price and quality. The indictment charges that the counterfeit and generic handbags and wallets were worth approximately \$1.4 million at average counterfeit prices (typically \$35 for wallets

and \$40 for handbags), and well over \$6 million had they been authentic.

“The public needs to know that when they buy a counterfeit purse at a house party or on the street, their dollars are ultimately helping to finance large-scale counterfeiting organizations,” said Acting Special Agent-in-Charge Matthew J. Etre of ICE in New England. “And every time they buy a knock-off purse, they are contributing to legitimate companies losing billions of dollars in revenue to counterfeiting every year.” ■

Inside ICE

425 I St NW
Washington, DC 20536
Attn: Office of Public Affairs

E-mail: InsidICE@dhs.gov

Visit us on the Web and register
for your free copy of Inside ICE!

We're On The Web!
www.ICE.gov

www.ice.gov

Toll-Free Tip Line
1-866-DHS-2ICE



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

ICE Thanks Von Amelunxen Foundation



ICE New York Special Agent-in-Charge Martin Ficke, right, presents a letter and certificate of appreciation from Acting Assistant Secretary John Clark to Karen Donnelly, Vice President of the Roger L. Von Amelunxen Foundation. ICE recognized the private foundation, established in memory of a U.S. Customs patrol officer killed in the line of duty, for its assistance to ICE employees following Hurricane Katrina.