



Inside ICE

ICE GIVES STUDENTS ADVICE ON SEVIS

WASHINGTON, D.C.— ICE and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have issued important reminders to assist the estimated 200,000 foreign students and exchange visitors expected to arrive in the United States for the spring semester.

These reminders are intended to ensure that legitimate students are quickly processed at ports of entry. A comprehensive list of answers to frequently asked SEVIS questions has also been posted online at www.ice.gov and www.cbp.gov.

The SEVIS system was implemented after the 9/11 terrorist attacks as part of the federal government's effort to restore integrity to the nation's immigration system.

SEVIS is a web-based program that maintains information on international students (F/M visas) and exchange visitors (J visas) and their dependents residing in the United States. It is administered by ICE's Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP) and used by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers at ports of entry. SEVIS has simplified what was once a manual process, resulting in more accurate and timely data, faster processing and fewer delays.

"The SEVIS program is a successful homeland security initiative due in large part to the cooperation we have received from all of the program's stakeholders," said Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia. "As the new 2005 semester starts, we encourage all SEVIS participants -- including students, exchange visitors, and school and program administrators -- to review the program requirements and take responsibility for making sure their records are updated and correct. By making these efforts now, our academic and

exchange program partners can help to ensure that legitimate students don't experience unnecessary delays when they enter the country."

ICE and CBP offer the following recommendations for students and exchange visitors:

Travel Tips for Students And Exchange Visitors

1. Hand carry (do not check) the following documents:
 - a. Your passport;
 - b. Your SEVIS form I-20 or DS-2019;
 - c. Evidence of financial resources;
 - d. Evidence of student or exchange visitor status, such as tuition receipts or transcripts;
 - e. Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee; and
 - f. The name and contact information of your designated school official.

Important Note: *If you are a new student, remember to carry with you the sealed envelope given to you by the U.S. Department of State's Consular Officer -- attached to your passport. It is important that you do not open this envelope.*

2. Inform the CBP Inspector at the port of entry as soon as possible that you will be a student in the United States.
4. Report to your school or program upon arrival so that your school official can validate your participation in SEVIS.
5. Maintain contact with your designated school official throughout your stay to ensure your SEVIS data is updated and accurate.

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ICE, COLOMBIANS NAB VALLE CARTEL TARGET

One of ICE's top drug trafficking and money laundering fugitives was arrested December 28 in Colombia.

Colombian authorities, working with agents from the ICE Attaché Office in Bogotá, captured Jose Dagoberto Florez-Rios, a.k.a "Chuma," on a farm outside Medellin. Florez-Rios is considered one of the key members of Colombia's Norte Valle Cartel (NVC). Earlier this year, the U.S. State Department offered a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to the arrest of Florez-Rios and four other fugitives.

"Florez-Rios is one of ICE's top drug money laundering fugitives and his arrest today is yet another example of the unprecedented law enforcement cooperation between the United States and Colombia. The arrest also demonstrates the value of pursuing the money trail in drug investigations. This ICE investigation began with a raid on three, small money transfer businesses in Queens. Ultimately, it led to the highest levels of Colombia's Norte Valle Cartel," said Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia.

Florez-Rios is charged in a federal indictment with drug and money laundering violations. He is described in the indictment as the second-in command to Arcangel de Jesus Henao-Montoya, a senior leader of the Norte Valle Cartel who was arrested earlier this year and is currently in custody in New York.



Jose Dagoberto Florez-Rios, a.k.a "Chuma," is escorted by Colombian authorities following his arrest on December 28. Florez-Rios was one of ICE's top drug trafficking and money laundering targets.

Florez-Rios is a member of the Henao-Montoya family by marriage.

Federal indictments describe the Norte Valle Cartel as Colombia's largest and most feared drug organization. Between 1990 and the present, the cartel allegedly exported more than 1.2 million pounds of cocaine worth more than \$10 billion to the United States. The cartel is currently believed to be responsible for between 30 and 50 percent of the cocaine entering the United States.

Florez-Rios' arrest resulted from a lengthy probe of Colombia's Norte Valle Cartel that began in the mid-1990s. The investigation was conducted by the El Dorado Task Force, an ICE-led anti-money laundering task force in New York, as well as by ICE agents in Colombia

and Colombian authorities.

The ICE investigation initially focused on small storefront money remitter businesses in Queens, New York. The individual was arrested by ICE agents, convicted, and in May 2002, sentenced to life in prison. The investigation continued, leading to charges against the cartel's key leaders. Luis Hernando Gomez-Bustamante was charged with leading a continuing criminal enterprise. Arcangel de Jesus Henao-Montoya and Florez-Rios were both charged with drug and money laundering violations. On January 15, 2004, Henao-Montoya was captured in Panama and expelled into ICE custody. On July 2, 2004, Gomez-Bustamante was detained by Cuban authorities and is believed to remain in Cuban custody.

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. Please send comments and contributions to:

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**Russ Bergeron
Editor**

HEAD OF CIG SMUGGLING RING PLEADS GUILTY

EL PASO, Texas—Jorge Abraham, the head of an international cigarette smuggling organization, pleaded guilty Dec. 15, 2004, to conspiracy to smuggle cigarettes into the United States, and trafficking in contraband and counterfeit cigarettes.

ICE agents arrested Abraham and 13 other members and co-conspirators of his organization Jan. 28, 2004.

An ICE investigation revealed that between September 2001 and December 2002 the Abraham organization smuggled and distributed at least 11,360 cases of counterfeit and contraband cigarettes, and 101 cases of liquor, into the United States for illegal sale.

The retail value of these counterfeit cigarettes was about \$5.4 million. The total loss of revenue to the federal government and various state governments (New York, California and Texas) was about \$9.2 million. "This organization made large profits from circumventing the system and not paying the required taxes, cheating the American taxpayers out of millions of dollars," said ICE El Paso Special Agent-In-Charge Ronald Wood.

Abraham's criminal enterprise would smuggle counterfeit cigarettes manufactured in China. The counterfeit goods were packaged and labeled to give the appearance of a legitimate package. Abraham would make \$60,000 profit by selling 60 cases of counterfeit cigarettes.

The more than 107 million counterfeit and genuine market cigarettes smuggled by the organization would fill a dozen 40-foot shipping containers. A carton of counterfeit cigarettes (containing 200 cigarettes) can cost as little as \$2 to pro-

duce in Asia. That same carton of counterfeit cigarettes, when smuggled into the United States, can be sold on the streets of New York City for \$70 or more. Abraham's 71-year-old father and nine other members of the ring have also pleaded guilty to count one of the 92-count federal indictment in recent months.



ICE agents examine some of the thousands of cartons of counterfeit cigarettes seized when Jorge Abraham and his organization was taken down in January 2004.

ICE PROVIDES ADVICE ON SEVIS

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The Department of Homeland Security also reminds SEVIS registered schools and exchange visitor programs of their responsibility to maintain up-to-date records on all of their foreign students and exchange visitors.

As of December 2004, about 725,000 students and exchange visitors (F-1, M-1 and J-1 visa categories), along with 120,000 dependents, were registered in SEVIS. More than 7,800 schools and 1,400 exchange programs are active in SEVIS. From September 2003, when all foreign students, exchange visitors and their academic or cultural programs were required to register with SEVIS, through September 2004, SEVIS recorded a slight increase in the foreign student (F/M visa) population from approximately 605,000 to 640,000.

To date, ICE's Compliance Enforcement Unit, responsible for identifying individuals who attempt



A foreign student arriving at a U.S. port of entry undergoes inspection by a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer. An estimated 200,000 foreign students and exchange visitors will arrive in the United States for the spring semester, and ICE and CBP will track their arrival and status using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System.

to abuse the student immigration system, has sent 3,342 investigative leads on potential SEVIS violations to the field, resulting in 558 arrests.

ICE ARRESTS STOREFRONT PREACHER FOR PORN

CINCINNATI, Ohio— A storefront preacher and school bus driver was arrested by ICE agents December 28 for possession and distribution of child pornography.

Robert Elms, 49, who goes by the name "Father Dominic Elms," was charged in a federal complaint with possession and distribution of child pornography resulting from a Dec. 21 search of his storefront church and residence in Cincinnati.

The investigation into Elms, who is licensed to drive a school bus for the Princeton School District in Ohio, began after the Bundeskriminalamt in Frankfurt, Germany, began investigating a group of individuals who receive and distribute child pornography. The German authorities turned the information over to ICE agents at the ICE Cyber Crime Center (C3) in Fairfax, Va.

ICE agents executed a federal search warrant at Elms' residence with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the St. Bernard, Ohio, Police Department. Agents seized three computers and

numerous media, including formatted computer disks suspected of containing child pornography.

"Those who trade in child pornography are supporting the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable among us," said Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent-in-Charge for ICE investigations in Detroit, whose office oversees investigations in the Cincinnati resident agent-in-charge office. "ICE will not allow them to use cyberspace to hide this repugnant activity. We will use all of our investigative tools to identify these individuals and bring them to justice."

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, added, "The U.S. Attorney will work with ICE to ensure that this individual does not have the opportunity to continue to violate the law. People who assume that their use of the Internet or other technology will protect them from detection will be found, arrested and prosecuted to the fullest extent."



Operation Predator

This investigation and arrest are part of Operation Predator, a comprehensive Department of Homeland Security initiative to protect young people from child sex tourists, human smugglers and traffickers, child pornographers and international child sex tourists. Operation Predator draws on the full spectrum of intelligence, investigative, cyber, and detention and removal functions of ICE to target those who prey on children. Since Operation Predator began in July 2003, ICE has made more than 4,700 arrests nationwide, including 41 in Ohio.

ICE WINS CONVICTION OF FRAUD DOC COURIER

CHICAGO, Ill.—A Mt. Prospect man who was a courier for a counterfeit document operation that provided fake identity documents to illegal aliens has been sentenced to 15 months in prison.

Juan Campos-Martinez, a 35-year-old illegal alien from Mexico, was sentenced to 15 months in prison Dec. 21 for providing fake Social Security cards, Resident Alien cards – also called "green cards" – and Mexico drivers licenses to illegal aliens.

ICE special agents assisted the Des Plaines, Ill., Police Department in the execution of two state search warrants. A search of Campos-

Martinez's residence revealed numerous counterfeit documents hidden inside the oven, a laminator and more than \$400 in cash. Campos-Martinez was arrested on the scene.

During a search at the home of Gustavo and Andrea Rios in Streamwood, Ill., ICE agents and Des Plaines police found computer equipment used to produce counterfeit documents, including three computers, a laminator, printers, scanners, photographic paper, logos and blank sheets of Social Security cards and green cards. In addition, approximately \$35,000 was seized from various locations in the home. The subsequent investigation by ICE

revealed that Campos-Martinez worked as a courier for Gustavo Rios.

"ICE has zero tolerance for anyone making, selling, providing or using fraudulent documents," said ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Elissa A. Brown, who leads investigations in the Chicago region. "As the 9/11 Commission pointed out, fraudulent documents are primary tools of terrorists and criminals. The criminals who make and sell fraudulent documents will sell them to anyone, whether that person is an illegal alien, a violent criminal or a terrorist. They do not care who the client is as long as they make a profit."

ICE AGENTS ARRESTS EX-SOLDIER ON CITIZENSHIP FRAUD CHARGES

NEW YORK, N.Y.—ICE agents arrested an ex-soldier who used his uniform and enlistment to obtain citizenship even though he was discharged from the U.S. Army in disgrace for refusing to deploy with his unit to Iraq.

Marcus Forvis, a citizen of Haiti, was arrested December 16 by ICE agents and deputy U.S. Marshals working as a fugitive task force on charges of making false statements.

"It is a slap in the face to every soldier who has earned citizenship by honorably serving in the United States military," said Special Agent-in-Charge Martin Ficke, who leads ICE investigations in New York.

Forvil was ordered to deploy to Iraq but failed to report. He was subsequently convicted at summary court martial and discharged from the Army in August under "Other Than Honorable" conditions.

Forvil allegedly appeared at a naturalization interview Sept. 5 wearing the Army uniform he was no longer entitled to wear and presented an identification card that showed he was still on active duty. Forvil also allegedly stated that he had never been "arrested, cited or detained by any law enforcement office, including military officers, for any reason."

ICE DEPORTS JORDANIAN PILOT FOR MARRIAGE FRAUD, FAA LIES

CHICAGO, Ill.—ICE deported a 24-year-old pilot who married a United States citizen to evade immigration laws and lied on multiple Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot applications that he was a U.S. citizen.

Sami Abuhamatto, a citizen of Jordan, was deported December 16. He had been convicted in federal court on four counts of lying on various FAA applications to become a certified commercial pilot and flight instructor.

He was also convicted for committing marriage fraud by paying a U.S. citizen \$1,500 to marry him so he could fraudulently apply for permanent residency in the United States.

ICE special agents arrested Abuhamatto in July and charged him with making false statements about being born in the United States and falsely claiming U.S. citizenship on three applications he submitted to the FAA in 2001 and 2002. Abuhamatto signed his FAA applications stating the information included in the applications was true, but it was not.

"Lying about U.S. citizenship on an FAA application is a serious issue, especially in light of the 9/11 hijackings and terrorist attacks," said Special Agent-in-Charge Elissa A. Brown, who leads ICE in Chicago. "ICE agents work diligently to uncover and halt criminal activity that poses a threat to national security."

ICE, CANADIANS JOIN FORCES FOR NIGERIAN DEPORTATIONS

BUFFALO, N.Y.—ICE Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) officials, working in collaboration with Canadian immigration officials, deported 63 Nigerians on a charter flight December 14.

Fifty-eight of those deported were from the United States and five were from Canada. Forty-six had criminal records representing a wide range of criminal activities, including attempted murder, aggravated assault, possession and distribution of drugs, fraud, burglary, extortion, larceny and embezzlement. One of the Nigerians on the flight, Obot Anniedabasi, was convicted of attempted murder in Houston in 1993.

"We're pleased to work with our counterparts in Canada to remove these dangerous criminals from our streets, as part of ICE's mission to restore integrity to our immigration system," said Victor X. Cerda, Acting Director of ICE's DRO.

IOWA EGG PRODUCER PAYS ICE \$2 MILLION IN WORKSITE FINES

OMAHA, Neb.—The ICE office here has received a restitution check in the amount of \$883,675.43, the final payment from an Iowa egg producer who pleaded guilty to two counts of aiding and abetting the continued employment of illegal aliens.

The case began in the mid-1990s as a result of complaints from communities where Austin "Jack" DeCoster's facilities are located. DeCoster pleaded guilty in August 2003 and was sentenced to five years' probation. More than 100 illegal aliens were arrested during the course of the investigation.

DeCoster has also paid \$1.25 million in asset forfeiture, bringing the total he has surrendered to the federal government to more than \$2,133,000. The recent check for \$883,675.43 includes \$875,000 paid by DeCoster plus interest earned while the money awaited disbursement by a federal judge.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, responsible for the enforcement of border, immigration, customs, infrastructure and transportation security laws.

Mr. Goldwrench



Smugglers can get creative in their attempts to transport contraband. Shown above is a pipe wrench cast in solid gold that was intercepted by ICE agents as part of "Operation Meltdown," which uncovered \$1.4 million in gold that smugglers were attempting to move to Colombia disguised as common household goods.