



Inside ICE

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ICE Deportation Officer and U.S. Army Capt. Dan Bible, right, is shown during a convoy near Falluja in Iraq with his gunner, Sgt. Wesley Mitchell.

ICE HONORS CITIZEN SOLDIER HEROES

As the nation celebrates the 229th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence, ICE offices all over the country are honoring their citizen-soldiers who have courageously served and sacrificed to help the people of Iraq and Afghanistan secure their independence and freedoms.

More than 100 ICE employees have been called to active duty with their National Guard and Reserve units, and most have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Several have been wounded in battle, and one — Immigration Enforcement Agent (IEA) Roberto Arizola, Jr. — was killed in action near Baghdad.

The New Orleans Field Office of ICE's Office of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) is typical of ICE offices throughout the country that have seen employees deployed on active duty. One of those employees is Deportation Officer Daniel Bible, who recently returned

to his job at the DRO office in Oakdale, La. after a 15-month deployment to Iraq.

Bible, a U.S. Army captain and engineer, joined legacy INS as an IEA in Huntsville, Texas in October 1998 and became a deportation officer at Oakdale in July 2001. His military service dates to 1996, when he was commissioned as a second lieutenant at Providence College in Providence, R.I. He served as a platoon leader and engineering officer in units in Texas and Arkansas before being activated and deployed to Iraq as the Assistant Engineer Operations Officer for the 353rd Engineer Group based out of Oklahoma City. In Iraq, the unit was attached to the Army's 1st Cavalry Division.

Bible was responsible for engineer operations that supported the maneuver (combat) forces of the 1st Cavalry Division's Baghdad area of operation. He

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would assess the combat operations plan and then develop, coordinate and oversee the execution of engineering operations in support of the maneuver forces. When the situation dictated it, he served directly with the maneuver forces as a liaison. He was also part of an engineering team that designed, planned, funded and executed multimillion dollar construction projects in the Baghdad area.

“Within the first 30 minutes of being in Baghdad, we came under a mortar attack,” Bible said. “A mortar landed a couple of hundred yards away. I remember one of the soldiers asking, ‘What was that?’ A soldier near the end of his tour in Iraq responded, ‘That was just a mortar.’ It was surreal. The transition from being in awe over such an incident to recognizing the threat and reacting the way we were trained took place over a few days.”

Once his unit got settled in Iraq, Bible experienced different aspects of the combat environment. On one occasion, while Bible was conducting an engineering estimate on how best to protect an Iraqi police station, his unit came under direct small arms fire. The unit returned fire and no one was injured.

Then there was the first convoy from the base in Baghdad. “While on patrol we got hung up in traffic,” Bible said. “Several of us dis-

mounted to direct the vehicles out of our path. Not too far ahead, two vehicles with engine issues were blocking traffic. We cleared the jam, remounted our vehicles and proceeded with our mission. As we pulled away from the traffic, I heard the loudest explosion I had ever experienced. The blast occurred right where we had been stuck in traffic. It was my first encounter with an improvised explosive device and I was extremely proud at how the team reacted to what amounted to our first attack outside the wire.”

Pride, patriotism and a sense of accomplishment are a constant for Bible as he recalls his service in Iraq. He is frank in his assessment.

“The reality is that Iraq is dangerous,” Bible said, “and many good soldiers have lost their lives and limbs for the mission. However, there is another part of the story in Iraq. We have built schools and hospitals in Iraq. We have been helping bring power and clean drinking water to the Iraqi people. We are helping the Iraqis build infrastructure.

“We have also brought the Iraqi people freedom,” Bible continued. “Freedom is not an easy concept to grasp. It will take some time for the reality of freedom to take hold in Iraq.

“I remember talking to two Iraqi men the day before the first free election in Iraq. I asked them if they were going to vote. The younger of the two answered, ‘No way, it is too dangerous!’ However the second, older gentleman, paused and then responded, ‘I might die voting, my wife might die voting, my brothers and cousins all could die voting. I am going to vote. My family will vote. I have been waiting my entire life to be able to vote.’ That was one of the mo-

ments I felt most proud about our mission in Iraq.”

And Bible’s tour of duty in Iraq has given him a new perspective on his work with ICE and the efforts to protect America’s homeland.

“Terrorism at home or abroad has many similarities,” Bible said. “Terrorism is indiscriminate. ICE and DHS have made strides at consolidating the efforts of protecting the United States.”

Bible is not the only member of the ICE DRO team in New Orleans to serve. Others include U.S. Air Force Major Thaldaris Talley and Army Sergeant First Class Tyrone Bowman, both of whom serve ICE as deportation officers in the New Orleans DRO Field Office. Another New Orleans DRO Deportation Officer, Army Staff Sergeant Bernadette Hodge, is currently deployed in Iraq. And Coast Guard Petty Officer Sam Edwards, who has also served, is currently attending the IEA basic academy course in Glynco, Ga.

“We are grateful to all these ICE employees for their service to our country, both at home and abroad. When they return, we welcome them back to their families at home and friends at work,” said Craig Robinson, New Orleans DRO Field Office Director. “The nation owes a debt of gratitude to these and all the ICE employees who serve, and to the many service men and women around the globe.”

“I received numerous letters and care packages from my DHS family,” Bible said. “I appreciate everyone’s thoughts and prayers while I was away and the constant reminders of how good it is to be an American. Thank you all.”

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

ICE AGENTS ARREST 34 IN SAN JUAN PROJECT

SAN JUAN, P.R.—ICE agents, working with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico, arrested 34 persons on gun and drug charges in the Vista Hermosa public housing project in the municipality of Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

The operation, announced June 28, was part of the San Juan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area's (HIDTA) Project Safe Neighborhood, a nationwide initiative to reduce gun crime and other illegal activities in any high crime area.

ICE worked with the U.S. Marshals, the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigations Division; the Bureau of Arms, Tobacco and Firearms; the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Puerto Rico Police Department.

The multi-agency investigation revealed that several organizations were using the Vista Hermosa public housing project for the distribution of narcotics and guns. The location was also the focal point for money laundering of the proceeds generated by these illegal activity.

"To prevail, law enforcement agencies must work as a unified team and this is exactly what we have done here," said ICE San Juan's Acting Special Agent-in-Charge Lydia St. John-Mellado. "ICE, as well as other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, has embraced the concept of cooperation and camaraderie very responsibly to produce these kinds of results."

The 34 persons arrested are all United States citizens. They are in the custody of the U.S. Marshals and have been charged with various violations of federal law related to the illegal possession, distribution and sale of narcotics, as well as various violations of federal gun laws.



An ICE agent leads one of 34 persons arrested on various gun, narcotics and money laundering charges during a joint enforcement operation in Puerto Rico.

ICE JOINS FORCES WITH MLB, TIGERS DURING BASEBALL'S ALL-STAR WEEK

DETROIT, Mich.— ICE is joining forces with Major League Baseball, the Detroit Tigers and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to crack down on the illegal production, distribution and sale of counterfeit Major League Baseball merchandise and tickets during the 2005 Major League Baseball All-Star Week of July 8-12.

During a press conference at Comerica Park on June 30, potential counterfeiters were put on notice that counterfeiting laws will be fully enforced.

"ICE's broad authorities and expertise in combating trade fraud, financial crimes and smuggling makes

ICE uniquely positioned to combat the global threat posed by counterfeiters," said Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent-in-Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Detroit. "Our enforcement efforts target a criminal industry that costs the U.S. nearly a quarter trillion dollars annually."

The Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force warned that undercover investigators would be on the lookout for counterfeit merchandise at All-Star Week events at Comerica Park and the COBO Center as well as at manufacturing facilities, retail stores and sidewalk vendors in and around Detroit.

TWO PLEAD GUILTY TO FAKE JEANS TRAFFICKING

SAN DIEGO, Calif.— Two men have pleaded guilty in federal court to charges they conspired to smuggle counterfeit designer jean labels and rivets into the United States through the Otay Mesa border crossing as part of a plan to distribute hundreds of pairs of counterfeit jeans in the Los Angeles area.

Felipe Gonzalez, 28, and Alfredo Esqueda, 35, both of Los Angeles, pleaded guilty to federal felony charges of conspiring to traffic in counterfeit goods. In addition, Esqueda admitted to committing perjury in connection with testimony he previously provided in a criminal trial. The charges are the result of a three-year investigation by ICE.

“Trafficking in counterfeit merchandise is a multi-billion dollar global business that robs governments of vital revenues and the industry of its due profits,” said Serge Duarte, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in San Diego. “ICE is committed to dismantling these schemes because the



These jeans, which were to receive fake Calvin Klein labels, were seized by ICE agents when they arrested two men who planned to sell the counterfeits in the Los Angeles area.

profits from such illegal ventures often go to fund more criminal enterprises.”

Gonzalez, a Mexican national, admitted he agreed to traffic in counterfeit goods with Esqueda and others. As part of the scheme, Gonzalez acknowledged arranging for people to bring him counterfeit Calvin Klein labels from Mexico. Once the labels were delivered to him in Los Angeles, he had them sewn onto counterfeit jeans. Gonzalez

later sold the falsely labeled pants in Los Angeles as authentic Calvin Klein jeans.

In his plea, Esqueda admitted conspiring to bring counterfeit Levi and Versace labels and rivets from Mexico through the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. The labels were delivered to Los Angeles and sewn onto counterfeit jeans, which Esqueda subsequently sold as authentic. He admitted selling between \$400,000 to \$1 million in counterfeit goods.

ICE EXCEEDS 400 COMMUNITY SHIELD ARRESTS

WASHINGTON, D.C.— ICE officers have arrested eight known gang members in four cities and removed nine others in recent days. The arrests bring the total arrested to more than 400 since March 2005.



These arrests are the latest under Operation Community Shield, a national initiative aimed at disrupting and dismantling violent gangs.

Over the past week arrests occurred in San Francisco, Seattle, Atlanta and Detroit. The removals occurred

through the Buffalo, N.Y. Federal Detention Facility. All eight of the individuals arrested have been charged with being illegally present in the United States and are being detained pending their immigration court hearings.

The gang members deported from Buffalo were arrested around the country and staged at the facility as ICE completed the repatriation process. Their criminal activity included manslaughter, criminal weapons possession, robbery, assault and attempted robbery.

William Cleary, Buffalo Detention and Deportation Field Office Direc-

tor, said that the nine individuals removed were gang members from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. They belonged to gangs such as MS-13, the "Mexican Boys" of La Gran Familia, the "Big Kings" of SUR-13, "Esquadron," "La Gran Raza," and "Trinitarios."

"Every time ICE removes a dangerous and brutal gang member from the country our towns and cities become safer," Cleary said. "Even if the person removed is a low level member of a vicious criminal organization which profits from drug trafficking, prostitution and other violent activities."

CHECKERS HALL OF FAME FOUNDER GUILTY IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

PETAL, Miss.— The founder of the International Checker Hall of Fame in Petal pleaded guilty June 30 to federal money laundering violations after a six-month investigation led by ICE agents.

Charles Walker, 70, a former Mississippi state checkers champion who in 1976 founded the International Checker Hall of Fame, was arrested Jan. 7, 2005 by ICE agents at a motor home in a Wal-Mart parking lot in Gulfport, Miss.

At the time of his arrest, he was attempting to transfer property deeds for cash that purportedly came from drug smuggling. During the course of the investigation, an ICE undercover agent conducted several consensually monitored telephone calls and meetings with Walker to discuss his willingness to launder \$6 million in represented drug smuggling proceeds.

To conceal and disguise the origin of the money, Walker created fictitious contracts with fake companies through which he would pay the undercover agent a "consulting fee" with the agents' money, minus a 10 percent fee. Walker laundered \$100,000 through his personal account and through business accounts for the International Checker Hall of Fame and the International Christian Church.

ICE NABS NEW YORK EXECUTIVE ON INTERNET CHILD PORN CHARGE

NEW YORK, N.Y.— An ICE investigation has led to charges that Robert Johnson, ex-chief executive officer and chairman of the board of a major Manhattan corporation, used his business computer to download child pornographic movies from the Internet, purchased memberships on websites believed to distribute child pornography and then destroyed this evidence from his computer.

He faces a combined maximum of 50 years' imprisonment, including a mandatory minimum term of 5 years' imprisonment. Each of the three counts also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000 upon conviction.

A federal indictment alleges that ICE agents learned that Johnson, using the Internet aliases "robjob714" and "jobobo55," on a company computer, had purchased memberships to websites believed to contain and distribute child pornography. On May 4, 2004, an ICE agent spoke to two executives of the company and informed

them that ICE was investigating the use of a company computer to access Internet websites believed to contain and distribute child pornography, but did not name Johnson as a target.

Johnson allegedly learned of the investigation a few days later and then used a computer program called "Evidence Eliminator" to destroy and obliterate more than 12,000 files from the hard disk drive of the desktop and laptop computers assigned to him by the company.

Johnson retired from the company on or about May 14, 2004 and surrendered to federal authorities on June 28.

ICE PRESENTS N.C. SHERIFF WITH \$1 MILLION IN ASSET FORFEITURE

LEXINGTON, N.C.— Jeff Jordan, ICE Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge in Lexington, presented a check for \$1,179,856 to the Davidson County Sheriff's Office June 30.

The money awarded came from a seizure that was part of "Operation Tar Heel Gauntlet", an ICE investigation targeting the bulk cash smuggling activities of drug trafficking and money laundering organizations that utilize the interstate highway system located in North Carolina.



ICE Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge Jeff Jordan, right, presents a check for more than \$1 million to the Davidson County, N.C. Sheriff's Department.

ICE's Asset Forfeiture Program provides funding to state and local law enforcement agencies that participate in ICE investigations that lead to seizures and forfeitures. The law allows the government to take illegal profits from crimes such as narcotics smuggling, money laundering and fraud.

The more than \$1 million was seized as a result of a routine traffic stop conducted by a Davidson County Sheriff's Office detective near Lexington on Feb. 11, 2004. A consent search of the vehicle revealed that the money was hidden in several compartments.

ICE agents arrested two for their involvement in the bulk cash smuggling. Both were convicted and sentenced to 37 months in prison.

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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 five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

COMMUNITY SHIELD



An ICE agent examines graffiti from the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) street gang, one of the most violent and dangerous gangs in the United States. More than 400 gang members have been arrested by ICE nationwide since March 2005, when ICE began its Operation Community Shield initiative. Community Shield uses the unique authorities of ICE to target the members of violent street gangs that threaten the safety and security of U.S. communities.