



Inside ICE

ICE BREAKS UP HIGH PRIORITY MIDDLE EASTERN SMUGGLING RING

ICE agents arrested two Michigan residents on September 8 on charges of running an alien smuggling operation that illegally brought citizens from Iraq, Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries to the United States.

Neeran "Nancy" Hakim Zaia, age 50, and Basima "Linda" Sesi, 59, were among several arrested in an ongoing investigation. The two are Iraqi-born naturalized U.S. citizens and residents of Sterling Heights, a suburb of Detroit. They were charged in a five-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 3, 2004, and unsealed the day of the arrests.

The arrests were announced in Washington, D.C., by Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia, Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth L. Wainstein of the District of Columbia.

"Today's arrests in the United States represent excellent work done by ICE agents who tracked Neeran Zaia and her co-conspirators," said Assistant Secretary Garcia. "By arresting the leaders of this network, we have broken a human smuggling organization that exploited vulnerabilities in our border and we have shut down an avenue for smuggling individuals from Iraq, Jordan and other countries into the United States."

According to the indictment, Zaia owned a business called Universal Investment & Law Services, which she used as a conduit for alleged alien smuggling activities, even advertising in Detroit media outlets, including an Arab-language

magazine. Zaia and a co-conspirator also operated "Saudi-Jordan," a travel agency located in Amman, Jordan, and met there with migrants who wished to enter the United States.

The indictment alleges that Zaia and a co-conspirator recruited aliens in Iraq and Jordan who wished to be taken to the United States in exchange for money - often thousands of dollars. Zaia allegedly told the aliens she could obtain appropriate travel documents in exchange for those payments.

Zaia and other conspirators, according to the indictment, promised aliens they would obtain U.S. visas, but after securing partial payments the aliens instead were given visas from countries in South America. The defendants would allegedly transport the aliens to South American countries as a staging area for entry into the United States. Once the aliens were in South America, Zaia and the other conspirators would demand additional money to bring them into the United States.

The arrests and charges are the result of an ICE international undercover investigation led by ICE Special Agents Donald Bruckschen and Cindy Yang of the Washington D.C. Office, assisted by Special Agent Jeffrey Lyons and others from the Detroit ICE Office. The State Department's Diplomatic Security Service also assisted with the investigation.

The indictment alleges that in the course of this conspiracy, more than 200 aliens were smuggled illegally into the United States.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PUBLIC SECURITY: 2
**ICE Supports Security
At RNC in New York**

PUBLIC SECURITY: 3
**ICE Deports Two With
Links To Terrorists**

BORDER SECURITY: 4
**Bellingham AMO Nets
"B.C. Bud" Arrest**

BORDER SECURITY: 5
**ICE Finds 50 Illegal
Allens in Sailing Yacht**

ICE SUPPORTS SECURITY FOR RNC IN NEW YORK

ICE provided the second largest cadre of federal law enforcement personnel, deploying more than 200 officers in support of security and public safety efforts at the Republican National Convention (RNC) held in New York City August 30-September 3.

PUBLIC SECURITY

On August 25, ICE's Federal Protective Service (FPS) deployed to New York City. ICE FPS personnel worked to ensure public safety and continuity of operations at federal facilities within the New York City area.

Before the convention, FPS personnel received an intelligence briefing along with advanced training in riot and demonstration control, use of non-lethal weapons and hazardous material (HazMat) recognition and response. In addition to patrol officers, FPS provided specialty personnel, including HazMat personnel, K-9 teams, motorcycle officers, special agents, medical support team members, administrative personnel and electronic technicians. More than 200 security cameras around New York City were linked securely via the Internet to the Mobile Command Vehicle (MCV), other detail command centers and the Homeland Security Operations Center.

ICE FPS also provided MCVs to serve as communication centers for



ICE Federal Protective Service officers deploy in New York City as part of a major security operation for the Republican National Convention

multiple law enforcement agencies. Each MCV is equipped with the capacity to operate as primary or backup radio base stations for all levels of law enforcement. The MCVs also monitor video cameras from U.S. government facilities and retrieve different types of closed circuit video signals.

On July 9, 2003, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that the RNC was designated a National Special Security Event, establishing the U.S. Secret Service, now part of DHS, as the lead federal agency in charge of the design and implementation of the operational security plan. Over the course of the past year, numerous local, state and federal agencies

have worked together to put in place an unprecedented level of security for the national political conventions.

The RNC is the latest in a series of events this year in which ICE has supported security efforts. In addition to the RNC, ICE has supported security at the Democratic National Convention held in Boston in August, the Major League Baseball All-Star Game in Houston in July, the G8 Summit in Georgia in May and the International Monetary Fund-World Bank Meeting in Washington, D.C., in April.

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:

Russ.Bergeron@dhs.gov
Russ Bergeron
Editor

DHS MARKS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has established September as National Preparedness Month.

National Preparedness Month is an opportunity to focus on emergency preparedness and to engage Americans at the community level. The goal is to ensure that during September citizens make an emergency supply kit, create a family communications plan, and become better informed.

National Preparedness Month features hundreds of activities across the country to highlight the importance of individual emergency preparedness.

The National Preparedness Month coalition, which includes DHS, more than 80 organizations and all 56 states and territories, will encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare themselves and their families for any possible emergencies.

“National Preparedness Month will give everyone an opportunity to work toward a better prepared America,” Secretary Ridge said in announcing the activities. “This broad coalition and vast number of activities will allow us to reach millions of individuals and inform them about ways they can prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools.”

State and territorial activities range from preparedness booths at state capitals or state fairs; to proclamations, press conferences or town hall meetings on preparedness issues; to statewide public service announcements and emergency trainings. The National Preparedness Month partner organizations will help reach millions of Americans by communicating the simple ways that individuals can prepare for emergencies.

Organizations participating in the events include the American Red Cross, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Broadcasters and some of the nation’s largest retailers.

ICE DEPORTS TWO LINKED TO TERROR ACTIVITY

ICE has deported two men in separate cases after they were found to have links to terrorist activities.

PUBLIC SECURITY

In the first case, a Denver man who admitted attending a training camp run by a terrorist organization is back in his native country of Pakistan after being removed by ICE from the United States.

The removal of Sajjad Nasser, 29, was completed August 26 with his arrival in Pakistan on board an ICE charter flight. Nasser, who had been in U.S. government custody since March 2003, was convicted in Denver in December 2003 of possessing counterfeit immigration documents.

ICE fought for the legal permanent resident’s removal from the United States, arguing that his participation in a training camp sponsored by Jaish-e-Mohammed (the Army of Mohammed) amounted to providing material support to a designated

terrorist organization. The Pakistan-based group gained international notoriety for its alleged role in the execution of journalist Daniel Pearl.

Nasser’s case is among the first in which ICE lodged immigration charges against an individual based on the PATRIOT Act. In June, after months of hearings, an immigration judge ruled that participating in a training camp is a form of providing “material support” for a terrorist organization.

In the second case, a fund-raiser and Web site designer who supported a known terrorist organization was deported from the United States Aug. 24 by Dallas ICE officers.

Ayman Sabri Ismail, 34, a Jordanian citizen, worked for the Holy Land Foundation (HLF) of Richardson, Texas, that was known to provide financial support to HAMAS, designated by the U.S. State Department as a global terrorist group. Ismail entered the United States on a student visa in 1990. He violated the terms of his visa when he began

working in the United States. Ismail claimed he was merely a Web site designer, but documents seized from HLF showed he also had a significant role in fund raising for HAMAS, which used the funds to directly compensate families whose relatives died or were jailed furthering HAMAS’ violent campaigns, including suicide bombings.



Sajjad Nasser

BELLINGHAM'S FIRST ARREST NETS "B.C. BUD"

The deployment of officers and aircraft to ICE's new Air and Marine Operations (AMO) Branch in Bellingham, Wash., began paying off immediately with the seizure August 28 of more than 200 pounds of "B.C. Bud" marijuana in Sequim Harbor, Wash., and the arrest of a U.S. citizen who has been charged federally.

BORDER SECURITY

In addition to the marijuana, agents seized \$23,000 in cash and a 17-foot Malibu boat near the U.S.-Canada border in an area known for its high volume of drug smuggling.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police observed the boat's arrival in Canada and notified the Department of Homeland Security. An ICE AMO crew spotted the vessel as it crossed into U.S. waters from the south coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada.

In Sequim Harbor, ICE and U.S. Coast Guard investigative agents, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers and members of a state and local task force contacted the boat's operator. A search of the vessel revealed 209 pounds of "B.C. Bud" marijuana with an estimated wholesale value of \$627,000 concealed below the vessel's deck.

"ICE's surveillance capabilities play a crucial role in the effort to stem smuggling across the northern border," said Field Director Mark Beatty of ICE's Bellingham Air and Marine Branch. "Narcotics smugglers can expect to face more intense levels of enforcement than they have encountered before."

ICE formally opened the Bellingham Air and Marine Branch (AMB) at Bellingham International Airport August 18. It is the first of five planned facilities to augment the

nation's northern border security with air and marine law enforcement, surveillance and airspace security authorities. The Bellingham AMB began conducting regular mission patrols and is equipped for rapid incident response like these surveillance operations.

The Bellingham AMB adds another layer to northern border security as part of an initiative aimed at shutting down narcotics and human smuggling routes along the U.S.-Canada border. ICE will use many of the same enforcement and interdiction capabilities that have been employed for decades along the



An ICE Cessna 206, similar to the one shown above, flown by the recently-established ICE Air and Marine Operations Branch in Bellingham, Wash., spotted a vessel that eventually was found smuggling more than 200 lbs. of marijuana.

Southern border, in coordination with CBP, Canadian authorities and U.S. state and local law enforcement. At full capacity, there will be 69 federal law enforcement officers, pilots, air crew and mission support personnel.

ICE FINDS ILLEGALS AT DEFENSE PLANT

ICE agents arrested nine aliens in Arizona August 31 working in a Phoenix-area helicopter systems plant that manufactures aircraft for the U.S. military.

PUBLIC SECURITY

According to ICE agents, the unauthorized contract workers used fraudulent Social Security numbers and counterfeit Alien Registration Cards to obtain their jobs at the plant.

Unauthorized workers with counterfeit documents and access to security sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities -- such as air-

ports, nuclear power plants and defense contractors -- create a situation subject to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers or other criminals.

"We are committed to working with our federal law enforcement partners to safeguard sensitive facilities and infrastructures from those who could potentially do this nation harm," said Patricia Schmidt, Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge for ICE investigations in Phoenix. "When a person uses fraud or false documents to obtain a job, they mask not only their true identities, but also their motives and their criminal history if they have one."

ICE FINDS 50 ALIENS CRAMMED INTO LUXURY YACHT

Two men, one from Florida and one from Southern California, face federal criminal charges in an ICE investigation after being intercepted in one of the largest incidents of maritime human smuggling uncovered in the Los Angeles area in recent years.

BORDER SECURITY

A rented 44-foot yacht was intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard Aug. 30 carrying 50 Mexican nationals, including a three-year-old boy and a woman in her final month of pregnancy. The aliens were crowded into the vessel's small cabin, which was designed to sleep eight people.

ICE officials in Los Angeles, conducting the ongoing investigation, say the incident shows smugglers' growing desperation in the wake of heightened immigration enforcement along our nation's Southern border and at key Arizona and Los Angeles transportation hubs. That crackdown is forcing human smugglers to resort to new tactics in an effort to elude detection.



This rented sailing yacht was used to smuggle 50 illegal aliens into Los Angeles.

The two men facing charges allegedly picked up the aliens in the Mexican port city of Ensenada for the day long trip to Los Angeles. The migrants told ICE agents they paid \$3,000 each in smuggling fees.

U.S. Coast Guard officers interdicted the yacht at around 10 p.m. August 30 near the Angels Gate entrance to Los Angeles Harbor. The yacht was returned to the company that owns the vessel, and that company is cooperating in the investigation. ICE agents caution it is not uncommon for smuggling organizations to exploit legitimate businesses. The aliens will remain in ICE custody until authorities identify material witnesses in the case.

“The fact that these people were transported on a luxury yacht does not diminish the huge risks involved. Human smuggling is a dangerous criminal enterprise that puts the safety of our communities and even our country at risk,” said Loraine Brown, Special Agent-in-Charge for ICE in Los Angeles.

The two men facing charges allegedly picked up the aliens in the Mexican port city of Ensenada for the day long trip to Los Angeles. The migrants told ICE agents they paid \$3,000 each in smuggling fees.

BOSTON ICE ARRESTS 13 ALIENS IN SOCIAL SECURITY CARD SCAM

Boston ICE agents on August 30 arrested 13 illegal aliens who had fraudulently obtained genuine Social Security Cards.

PUBLIC SECURITY

The arrests followed an earlier investigation that uncovered a scheme involving a corrupt Social Security Administration employee who assisted aliens, primarily from Brazil, in applying for and obtaining real Social Security cards by falsifying paperwork and filing false supporting documents. The authentic Social Security cards allowed the aliens to further establish seemingly legitimate identities in the United States by obtaining other forms of authentic identification such as driver's licenses.

The 13 people arrested were charged with fraudulent use of a Social Security card number. Two of those arrested were also charged with illegally re-entering the United States after having been previously deported. Last year, former Social Security Administration employee, Jesse Rocha, 33, of Lake Dallas, Texas, and Karl K. Vasconcelos, 37, of Mooresville, N.C., were convicted along with three others.

An analysis of Social Security records by investigators indicated that Rocha processed more than 1,700 fraudulent applications for Social Security cards. It is believed that 868 fraudulently obtained Social Security cards were used to obtain other documents.

ICE AGENTS FIND POT IN POTTERY

Four persons were arrested and more than 1,600 pounds of marijuana was seized September 3 after ICE agents and state and county investigators found the marijuana stashed in the base of clay pottery pieces at a warehouse in Inman, S.C.

The investigative team developed information about suspicious activity at what investigators describe as a “nightclub and pottery business.”

Investigators executed a search warrant at the business and found one person there, who they arrested. The drugs were found to be concealed within clay pottery pedestals about three feet tall. Three other men who had unloaded the pottery from a truck were also arrested. Investigators believe the drugs were smuggled across the Southwest border. The four who were arrested are being held on \$500,000 bond pending federal charges.

Inside ICE

425 I St NW
Washington, D.C. 20536
Attn: Office of Public Affairs

Russ Bergeron, Editor
Phone: 202-514-2648
Fax: 202-514-1776
Email: Russ.Bergeron@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) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terrorist and criminal activities.

Hit Hard in Florida



A surveillance photo shot from an ICE Air and Marine Operations P-3 aircraft vividly shows the damage in Florida following Hurricane Frances. ICE's aerial surveillance will be used by federal and state officials to help assess damage and direct recovery efforts.