



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

September 23, 2004

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News Release

ICE AGENTS ARREST 5 FOR FAKE DOCUMENT SALES *Sold Social Security cards, birth certificates, immigration cards*

SCRANTON, Pa.—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents served four criminal search warrants and arrested four people—including a known child molester—here Wednesday night for the illegal sale of counterfeit Social Security cards, birth certificates and immigration documents in Lackawanna County.

Counterfeit documents are frequently sought by persons attempting to establish fraudulent identities in order to circumvent the nation's immigration laws or engage in criminal activities.

Under one warrant, ICE special agents arrested Jouse Flores-Abadie, 33, an El Salvador citizen living here illegally who resided in an apartment above Garcia's Market at 824 Pittson Ave. here. At Abadie's residence, ICE agents recovered \$1,200 that had been used by agents to purchase counterfeit documents, five Alien Registration Cards, and five Social Security cards.

In separate warrants, ICE special agents arrested:

Francisco Hernandez-Garcia, a 45-year-old citizen of Mexico and Legal Permanent Resident living at 946 Madison Ave. here. At Hernandez-Garcia's residence, ICE agents recovered five counterfeit Alien Registration Cards and five fake Social Security cards.

Oswaldo Tafoya, 27 years old and a citizen of Mexico in the United States illegally who resides at 115 East Market, Apt. 2 here. Agents discovered 10 counterfeit Social Security cards at this location and a counterfeit Alien Registration Card bearing Tafoya's name was recovered from a Green Jeep Liberty parked at the residence.

ICE agents arrested 41-year-old Miguel Monge-Aroche at 333 Palm Street. Monge-Aroche is a citizen of Mexico residing here illegally who has been previously removed from the United States by ICE. Monge-Aroche is a child predator convicted in California of lewd and lascivious acts with a minor. ICE agents found a fake Social Security card and a phony Alien Registration Card at Monge-Aroche's residence.

The production and sale of counterfeit documents is illegal in the United States. Counterfeit documents are considered by ICE to be essential building blocks for terrorist organizations and criminal enterprises. The agency takes a zero tolerance approach to the manufacturing, purchase and use of all documents used to establish fraudulent identities.

"We suspect that those arrested were selling documents that could be used to establish fraudulent identities," said Bill Reid, ICE special agent-in-charge for Philadelphia. "Counterfeit documents are wedges for persons here illegally to exploit local, state and national systems. I'm greatly concerned that a fraudulent identity would enable a person—possibly a terrorist—to get a job or obtain a position that affords them access to critical infrastructure like airports, telecommunications centers, and power and water plants. The danger factor increases tenfold once a person's legitimized with a fake document."

"I encourage every person who must look at an identity or benefits document to look at it closely," added Reid. "The first line of defense is often with the employers, bank employees, benefits administrators, and others who come into contact with these documents every day. If you suspect counterfeit documents are being used by someone, then report it to us through the DHS tip line at 1-866-DHS-2ICE."

All those arrested are in the custody of the U.S. Marshal's Service pending criminal charges.

In those instances when a illegal alien faces criminal prosecution, ICE places an administrative detainer on the person to prevent their release. Upon release—whether by conviction and completion of a sentence, by acquittal after trial, or by prosecutorial discretion—ICE will place them in removal proceedings.

Under this process, persons eligible for immediate removal can be deported quickly and those persons entitled to due process will be afforded the opportunity to appear before an immigration judge to have their immigration status determined.

Persons previously removed from the United States are eligible for immediate removal without an appearance before an immigration judge. Legal Permanent Residents must have their status revoked by the courts before they can be removed.

The Pennsylvania State Police and Social Security Administration investigators assisted with the arrests and the investigation.

The case has been accepted for prosecution by the United States Attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania and will be prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher H. Casey.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terror and criminal networks.