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Office of the General Counsel
Attn: FOIA Service Center
Executive Office for Immigration Review
5107 Leesburg Pike, Suite 2150
Falls Church, VA 22041
[EOIR FOIA Public Access Link \(PAL\)](#)

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From: "joseph.r.schaaf@usdoj.gov" <joseph.r.schaaf@usdoj.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 2, 2022 at 04:02:41 PM EST
Subject: DOJ-EOIR FOIA Request # 2023-01424

This correspondence is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated 10/13/2022 to the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) in which you seek copies of The Lookout fraud newsletter.

A search was conducted and one or more records responsive to your request were located. We are granting partial access to the responsive record(s).

Portions of the records have been redacted in accordance with FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6), which concerns material the release of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of third parties.

Additionally, portions of the enclosed records have been redacted in accordance with FOIA Exemption 7A, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(A), which concerns records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes the release of which could reasonably be expected to interfere with on-going enforcement proceedings.

Additionally, portions of the enclosed records have been redacted in accordance with FOIA Exemption 7C, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(7)(C), which allows for withholding of information compiled for law enforcement purposes the release of which could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Finally, portions of the enclosed records have been redacted in accordance with FOIA Exemption 7E, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(E), which concerns records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes the release of which would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions. FOIA Exemption 7E extends protection of information related to agency technology systems. See *Levinthal v. FEC*, 219 F.Supp.3d 1, 9 (D.D.C. 2016).

Please be advised that we have considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records and applying FOIA exemptions.

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV 2010). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist. See <http://www.justice.gov/oip/foiapost/2012foiapost9.html>.

You may contact the EOIR FOIA Public Liaison by e-mail at EOIR.FOIARequests@USDOJ.GOV or by telephone number (703) 605-1297 for any further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request. Please reference the FOIA control number. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, Room 2510, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001; e-mail at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at (202) 741-5770; toll free at (877) 684-6448; or facsimile at (202) 741-5769.

If you are not satisfied with the Executive Office for Immigration Review's determination in response to this request, you may administratively appeal by writing to the Director, Office of Information Policy (OIP), United States Department of Justice, 441 G Street, NW, 6th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20530, or you may submit an appeal through OIP's FOIA STAR portal by creating an account following the instructions on OIP's website: <https://www.justice.gov/oip/submit-and-track-request-or-appeal>. Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within 90 days of the date of this response to your request. If you submit your appeal by mail, both the correspondence and the envelope should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

Sincerely,

Joseph Schaaf
Supervisory Attorney Advisor (FOIA)

THE LOOKOUT

May 2017

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 1

Contact Info:

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Fraud Program Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Diane Kier

Associate General Counsel

Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel (detailee)

Investigator

Phillip Rimmer

WELCOME!

Welcome to the Lookout, a new publication from EOIR's Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program. The Lookout is designed to inform you about issues regarding fraud, immigration scams, and the unauthorized practice of law before EOIR.

When asked, many of you indicated that you wanted a newsletter that was brief and relevant to EOIR. We have listened to your suggestions. Each issue of the Lookout will have a "Lookout List" with names and addresses associated with recent wrongdoing. "Current Scams" will include descriptions of immigration scams perpetrated against the courts and immigrants. "Recent Prosecutions" will include updates on cases where the Fraud Program has directly worked with law enforcement and prosecutors to hold individuals committing fraud accountable, which in most cases came from your referrals. We are also including updates about Fraud Program activities, other relevant immigration fraud in the news, and resources for you to use.



This publication is for internal dissemination only. The information contained here and on the Fraud Program's intranet pages may be law enforcement sensitive, and cannot be shared outside of EOIR.

Fraud Program Updates

Paralegal

REFERRALS:

We rely on your referrals of suspicious activity. Please refer any matter in which you suspect document fraud, application fraud, criminal behavior by a party or representative, the unauthorized practice of law by a non-party, or any other matter implicating fraud and abuse in proceedings.

Federal Resources:

Other Resources:

Trainings- We want to get to know you! The Fraud Program has been traveling to conduct in-person training. To date, we have provided training at 22 immigration courts and the BIA. Expect a visit soon if we have not made it to your area.

Internet- In addition to the launch of the redesigned intranet page, the Fraud Program is proud to announce that the public face of the Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program on the INTERNET has been updated and redesigned. Highlights of these changes include.

- A Fraud Program main page, which includes a detailed description of the program, current immigration scam warnings, and resources.
- A new page that explains how to file a complaint with the Fraud Program.
- A new page that outlines who can represent individuals before EOIR, and provides a map with links to all of the entities that license attorneys so that individuals can research whether an attorney is validly licensed.
- An updated Reading Room with links to the Fraud Program's monthly Fraud Reading List, a compilation of immigration-related fraud in the news that is disseminated to law enforcement and prosecutors.

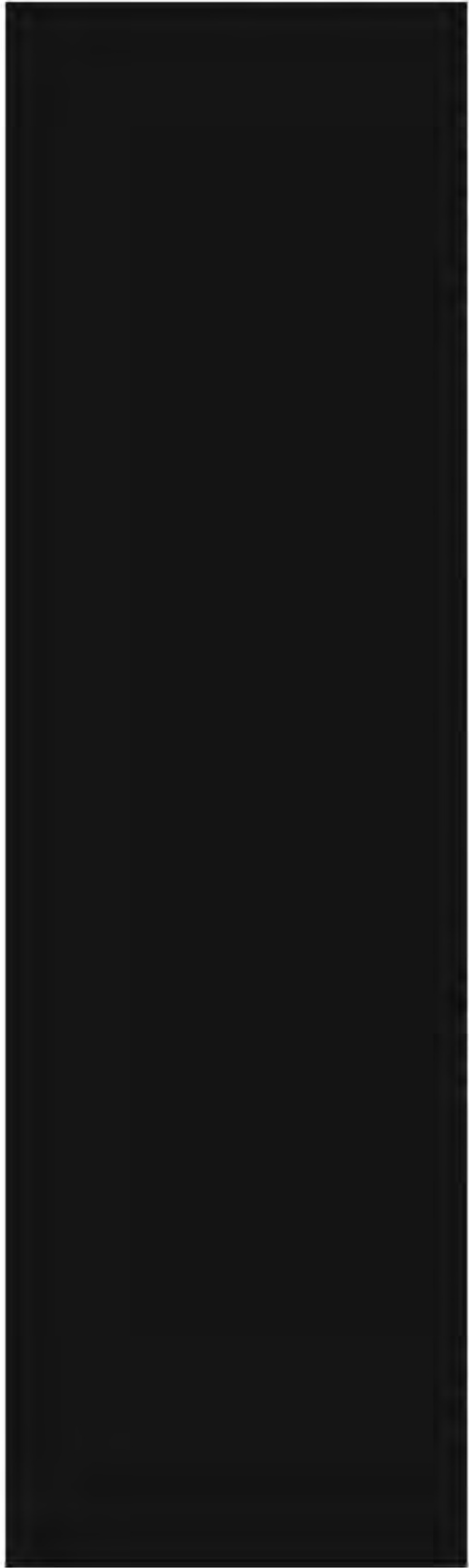
We welcome you to take a look at the changes as they launch and tell us what you think! Feedback on all the Program's recent efforts is appreciated, as are referrals of any suspected fraud.

Fraud Program Investigator- The Fraud Program welcomed [REDACTED] as our full time investigator in November 2016. [REDACTED] comes to us with a wealth of investigatory experience within the Department of Defense and the Defense Information Systems Agency. His addition to the Fraud Program team enables us to conduct deeper investigations into fraud concerns and proactively investigate patterns and practices of fraud.

Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by emailing or calling the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly.





You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud



Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- 
- [Edwin Rivera](#): Repeatedly prosecuted for unauthorized practice of law in New York.
- 
- 
- [Gloria Dora Saucedo](#): Suspended accredited representative who was prosecuted for unauthorized practice of law.
- 

Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, [please contact our office](#):

- 

Current Scams

- [10-year Green Card](#)
- [Boilerplate Affidavits](#)
- [Impersonating Government Employees](#)

- [Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law](#)

Recent Prosecutions

[LAFEOTA \(Rose Sanchez-Canete\)](#)

[Rivas-Alva Immigration and Notary Services \(Eric and Jessica Alva\)](#)

[Lacayo and Associates \(Leonard and Ada Lacayo\)](#)

[People of State of California v. Cabrera \(Oswaldo Cabrera\)](#)

[State of Nevada v. Starks \(Rena Starks\)](#)

[State of Texas v. United Immigration Consulting, LLC \(Edwin Zavala\)](#)

[People of State of California v. Madera \(Alice Madera\)](#)

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

[Chicago immigration attorney, Robert DeKelaita, convicted and sentenced for conspiracy to commit asylum fraud](#)

[Brooklyn man charged for posing as U.S. Immigration employee](#)

[Fake U.S. Embassy in Ghana operated for About a Decade](#)

[California Man Pleads Guilty to Student Visa Fraud Scheme; LA Times article](#)

[Rhode Island Man Pleads Guilty to Filing False Asylum Applications on behalf of Immigrants](#)

[California Marriage Fraud Ring Prosecuted](#)

THE LOOKOUT

July 2017

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 2

Contact Info:

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Fraud Program Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Diane Kier

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Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Investigator

Phillip Rimmer

EOIR Commitment to Addressing Immigration Fraud and Abuse Highlighted

On June 22, 2017, EOIR Acting Director James McHenry issued a memorandum to all EOIR employees, stressing the importance of identifying and reporting fraud and abuse before the agency. He reminded EOIR personnel that application and benefit fraud in immigration proceedings undermines the integrity of the system, places unwarranted burdens on taxpayers, and puts public safety and national security at risk. Director McHenry emphasized the need for vigilance in combating immigration fraud and noted that every fraudulent application further burdens the immigration law system. To that end, Director McHenry directed EOIR personnel to report such concerns to the Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program.

Also on June 22, Director McHenry issued a press release stressing the role of EOIR's Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program in safeguarding the validity of immigration proceedings.

Fraud Program Updates

Trainings- We want to get to know you! The Fraud Program has been traveling to conduct in-person training. To date, we have provided training at 29 immigration courts and the BIA. Expect a visit soon if we have not made it to your area.

New Fraud and Attorney Discipline Programs Supervisor - The Office of General Counsel welcomed Mark Noferi as Senior Counsel for Immigration, with oversight over the Fraud and Attorney Discipline Programs, in May 2017. Mark comes to EOIR from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of General Counsel.

Paralegal

REFERRALS:

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Federal Resources:

Other Resources:

There, he served as a subject matter expert on immigration enforcement and removal and coordinated legal advice on litigation, regulations, legislation, and policymaking with intra- and inter-agency stakeholders. Previously, Mark was the Enforcement Fellow for the American Immigration Council, a Visiting Associate Fellow at the Center for Migration Studies, taught immigration-related classes and clinics at Brooklyn Law School and Seton Hall School of Law, litigated at Dewey and LeBoeuf LLP, and clerked for the Hon. Harold Baer, Jr. in the Southern District of New York. Mark has a J.D. from Stanford Law School and a B.A. from Boston College.

New Fraud Program Associate General Counsel - After serving with the Fraud Program on detail since August 1, 2016, Paul Monsky joined us in May 2016 on a permanent basis as a full-time attorney. Paul has over a quarter-century of experience at EOIR with, first, the Chicago Immigration Court, and, then, the Board of Immigration Appeals.

Partner Spotlight:

The Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys

The Fraud Program is working in partnership with the U.S. Attorneys' Offices to pursue federal criminal prosecutions against those involved in fraud or abuse of process in immigration proceedings. Most recently, in June, the Fraud Program provided critical testimony in criminal proceedings brought by the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania against Leaford George Cameron who is charged with mail fraud based upon impersonating an attorney and providing fraudulent legal services before the Philadelphia Immigration Court.

Moreover, the Fraud Program will be contributing an article entitled *Notarios and the Unauthorized Practice of Law: A Signature of Fraud* to the next United States Attorneys' Bulletin. The Fraud Program is also working with the U.S. Attorneys' Office to produce a webinar for the U.S. Attorneys' Offices on immigration fraud and abuse before EOIR, as well as the role of EOIR's Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program in combating such fraud and in supporting prosecutions.

Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by

calling or emailing the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly at [REDACTED]

You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

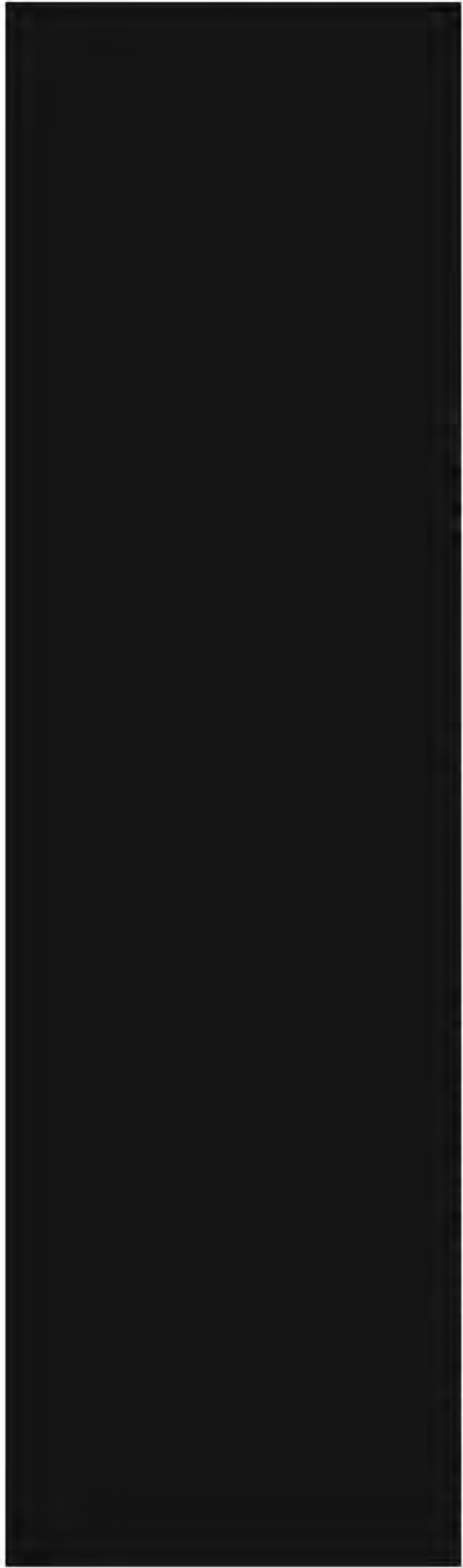
Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- [Leaford George Cameron](#): Charged with operating a fraudulent law practice between 2003 and 2015 during which he appeared before the Philadelphia Immigration Court.
- [Nimon Naphaeng](#): Convicted in 2017 of mail fraud and visa fraud for filing asylum applications without consent in 2014 and 2015.
- [Elena Rivas](#): Charged with violating California law in the manner in which she, and her organization, "Interamericana Unlimited," completed immigration paperwork.
- [Alexander Smirnoff](#) (a.k.a. Alex Scott): Posed as an attorney and created phony employment visas and other falsified immigration documents resulting in a guilty plea to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft.
- [Oswaldo Cabrera](#): Posed as an attorney, advertising his services on Spanish-language media, and held himself out as an immigration law expert resulting in a conviction for grand theft, attempted perjury, and conspiracy to violate the California Immigration Consultants Act.
- [Carlos Davila](#): Mr. Davila's status as an accredited representative has been terminated based upon his failure to divulge a prior criminal record and his organization, "A New Beginning for Immigrants Rights," is no longer recognized by the Department of Justice.
- [More](#)

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:

- [REDACTED]



- [Redacted]

Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, [please contact our office:](#)

- [Redacted]
- [More](#)

Current Scams

- [DHS OIG Hotline Number Used in Scam to Obtain PII](#)
- [Impersonating Government Employees \(including EOIR Fraud Investigator\)](#)
- [Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law](#)

Recent EOIR Prosecutions

[U.S. v. Cameron \(Leaford George Cameron\)](#)

[LAFEOTA \(Rose Sanchez-Canete\)](#)

[Rivas-Alva Immigration and Notary Services \(Eric and Jessica Alva\)](#)

[State of Nevada v. Starks \(Rena Starks\)](#)

[People of State of California v. Madera \(Alice Madera\)](#)

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

[Indian national pleads guilty for role in scam involving impersonation of immigration authorities](#)

[Pennsylvanian pleads guilty to making false statements on visa applications](#)



Schenectady siblings convicted of immigration fraud

Lakeland, FL, couple sentenced for large-scale immigration fraud

Kansas City man sentenced for large marriage fraud scheme

New York Notary Public pleads guilty to aiding and abetting visa fraud

Detroit immigration scammer sentenced to prison

Brooklyn man charged with posing as U.S. Immigration employee

Connecticut resident admits to operating immigration fraud scheme

H2B Visa Fraud Schemer sentenced to federal prison

THE LOOKOUT

September 2017

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 3

Contact Info:

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Fraud Program Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Diane Kier

Associate General Counsel

Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Investigator

Phillip Rimmer

Fraud Program Contributes to United States Attorneys' Bulletin

The United States Attorneys' Bulletin is a bi-monthly publication published by the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys. The focus of the July edition was "Prosecuting Criminal Immigration Offenses." EOIR's Fraud Program contributed an article, *"Notarios and the Unauthorized Practice of Law: A Signature of Fraud."* The bulletin, introduced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, also contained a number of other articles relevant to fraud and abuse in immigration proceedings, including *"A Practical Approach to Prosecuting Passport and Visa Fraud Cases," "Using the Alien File in the Prosecution of Immigration Crimes," "Combating Transnational Smuggling Organizations: An Introductory Overview," "HSI's Public Safety Unit: Combatting Immigration Document and Benefit Fraud," "Prosecuting Fraudulent Immigrant Smuggling Schemes,"* and *"B-2 Visitor Visa Fraud: The Investigation and Prosecution of an International Business Scheme."* The July edition may be accessed at [65 U.S. Attorneys' Bulletin 4 \(July 2017\)](#).

Fraud Program Updates

Case Update - Lacayo and Associates - EOIR's Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program assisted the San Francisco City Attorney's Office in investigating Lacayo and Associates, a predatory immigration consulting business that provided immigration-related legal services it was neither authorized nor qualified to perform, resulting in frivolous or meritless immigration applications filed before EOIR. The investigation resulted in a Settlement Agreement, in which Lacayo and Associates admitted to defrauding clients and now must pay \$200,000 in restitution to its victims, \$200,000 in civil penalties, and shut down

Paralegal

REFERRALS:

We rely on your referrals of suspicious activity. Please refer any matter in which you suspect document fraud, application fraud, criminal behavior by a party or representative, the unauthorized practice of law by a non-party, or any other matter implicating fraud and abuse in proceedings.

Federal Resources:

Other Resources:

its immigration-related services operations. For more information, see [San Francisco City Attorney Press Release](#)

In Focus:

Transnational Smuggling Networks

Excerpt from the Department of State's September 7, 2017, article, "[The Diplomatic Security Service: On the Front Lines of Transnational Investigations](#)," which originally appeared in the September 2017 issue of [Police Chief Magazine](#)."

"..In 2012, an ARSO-I in a Central American country with which the U.S. government does not have strong relations was investigating a smuggling operation that was trafficking a significant number of Indian nationals through the Central American country to a final destination in the United States. The ARSO-I's thorough investigation and diplomatic work with that country's immigration and government officials led to successfully disrupting the illegal flow through the country and a significant decrease in illegal border crossings at the U.S. southern border.

The case began when the ARSO-I found a number of trends pointing to a transnational smuggling operation in the Central American country. Smuggling organizations were exploiting the fact that the country did not require Indian citizens to obtain a visa to travel to or transit through the country. A majority of those smuggled shared a similar profile: single males between the ages of 16 and 26, carrying little to no luggage, who claimed the Central American country's capital city as their final destination. The migrants claimed to be traveling to the country in order to learn Spanish, and they carried fraudulent invitation letters from one of three local Spanish-language schools. As the ARSO-I investigated further, he found that groups of 20 to 40 Indian nationals would arrive at a specific airport and stay at one of a handful of local hotels for 2 to 10 days before departing the country by land.

The ARSO-I identified more than 900 Indian nationals who had been apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border using the scheme. When the ARSO-I informed his local immigration counterparts, the country's government changed its policy to require an in-person interview for Indian nationals seeking transit visas. After the policy change, a northbound neighboring country began turning Indian travelers without visas back to the country from which they travelled, thus

preventing alien smuggling organizations from using the country as a way point for their eventual attempt at illegal entry into the U.S.

In another case, ARSO-Is in two Asian countries used their linguistic, diplomatic, and investigative skills to support a request from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB) involving document fraud and human smuggling into Los Angeles, California.

The CBP noticed that a group of asylum seekers who had flown to Los Angeles, California, had boarded a plane in a non-visa waiver Asian country using passports from a third country in the region that does participate in the U.S. visa waiver program. Upon arrival to the United States, however, the individuals identified themselves as citizens of the non-visa waiver country, requested asylum, and falsely claimed that they had lost the passports they had used to board the plane.

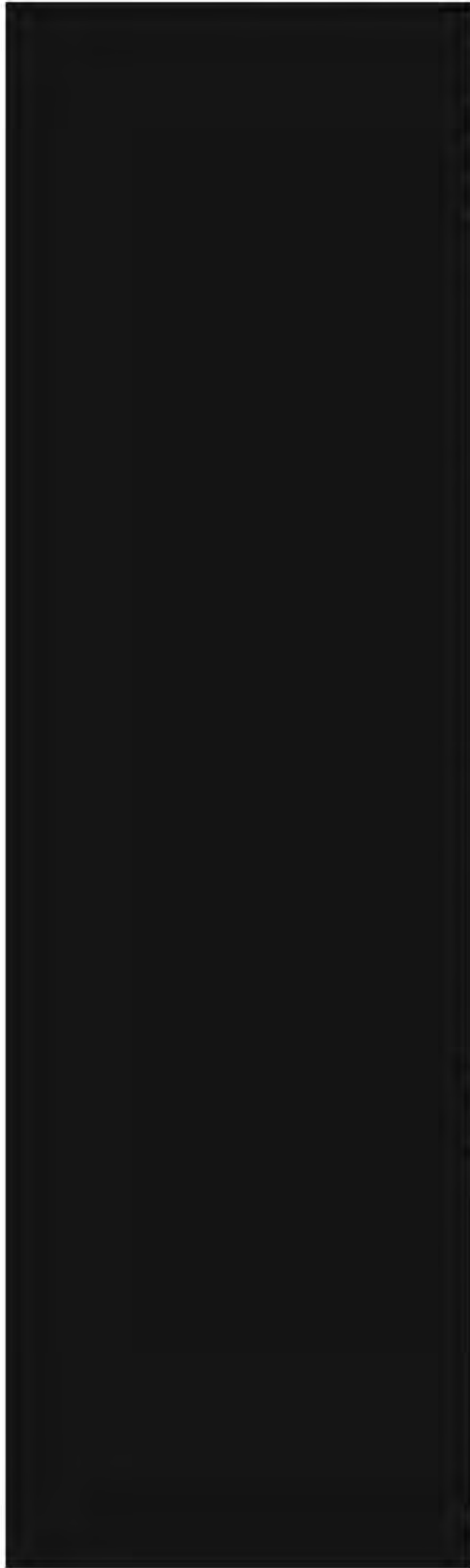
The ARSO-I recognized elements of a familiar human smuggling pattern: an individual from a visa waiver country uses his or her true identity to schedule a flight to the non-visa waiver country, with a follow-on leg to the United States. A different individual from a non-visa waiver country uses his true identity to schedule a flight from his home country to meet the other traveler. Both travelers and a fraudulent document facilitator arrive at the same airport in the non-visa waiver country at the same time. The facilitator provides high-quality fraudulent passports to the two travelers and transfers the legitimate boarding passes between the two travelers inside the airport's secure area. The traveler from the non-visa waiver country boards the plane using the other's identity, and claims asylum upon arrival to the United States..."

For the full article - click [here](#).

Making a Referral


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You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.



Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- Aracely Martinez: Also known as Maria Araceli Ramos de Martinez, engaged in a scheme in which she impersonated a U.S. immigration officer and falsely represented that undocumented immigrants could hire her to assist them in obtaining legal status.
- Patria Zuniga: From 2009 through 2013, Ms. Zuniga, and her daughters Alba Pena and Indranis Rocheford, operated a fraud scheme that targeted undocumented immigrants in Massachusetts seeking to legalize their status. As part of the scheme, Peña, Rocheford, and Zuniga told victims that Zuniga was either a lawyer or employee of U.S. immigration authorities who could help them become lawful permanent residents. Ms. Zuniga and her daughters were sentenced to prison and ordered to pay over \$700,000 in restitution for their roles in the scheme.
- Rosa and Domenico Cingari - The Cingaris submitted applications and petitions to USCIS containing materially false information in order to obtain USCIS I-797C Notices of Action. The Cingaris put their mailing address on all of the fraudulent forms so that USCIS would mail the Notices of Action to their business. They then sold the Notices of Action to their alien clients. Both were sentenced to federal prison.
- 

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:

- 

Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, please contact our office:

-

Current Scams

- DHS OIG Hotline Number Used in Scam to Obtain PII
- Impersonating Government Employees (including EOIR Fraud Investigator)
- Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law

Recent EOIR Prosecutions

U.S. v. Cameron (Leaford George Cameron)

LAFEOTA (Rose Sanchez-Canete)

Rivas-Alva Immigration and Notary Services (Eric and Jessica Alva)

State of Nevada v. Starks (Rena Starks)

People of State of California v. Madera (Alice Madera)

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

Feds warn Houston residents about people impersonating ICE officials

Better Business Bureau Warns of Potential DACA Fraud

United States files denaturalization complaints against individuals who fraudulently naturalized after having been ordered deported under different identities

The Lookout

November 2017

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 4

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Fraud Program Page

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Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Edward Grodin

Judicial Law Clerk

Investigator

Attorney General Focuses on Asylum Fraud in Speech at EOIR Headquarters

Attorney General Jeffrey B. Sessions spoke to employees at EOIR Headquarters on October 12, 2017, and targeted the crisis caused by fraud and abuse of the immigration process. The Attorney General identified the gaming of the system being perpetrated by unethical attorneys and the filing of baseless claims, and he called for the enforcement of penalties for the filing of baseless or fraudulent asylum applications. For the full text of the Attorney General's remarks, see [Attorney General Jeff Sessions Delivers Remarks to the Executive Office for Immigration Review](#).

EOIR Acting Director Remarks on Fraud in the Immigration System in Statement to Congress

On November 1, 2017, Acting Director James McHenry presented at a hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives, Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, entitled, "An Overview of the Executive Office for Immigration Review." In his statement, the Acting Director expressly identified embellishment, exaggeration, misrepresentation, and fraud as significant problems in the immigration system which erode respect for the immigration laws, risk public safety and national security, and create unnecessary burdens for American taxpayers. For the Director's full statement, see [EOIR Director James McHenry's Remarks to the Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, Committee of the Judiciary, United States House of Representatives](#).

EOIR General Counsel Provides Legal Opinion that Reporting Fraud

Phillip Rimmer

Paralegal

REFERRALS:

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Federal Resources:

Other Resources:

Does Not Violate Confidentiality Laws or Create an Appearance of Impropriety or Bias

The General Counsel for EOIR has provided a legal opinion addressing concerns that reporting suspected fraud and abuse of the immigration process to EOIR's Fraud Program which have arisen in the course of an individual's job duties would be improper. The General Counsel determined that an Immigration Judge or other court staff do not violate confidentiality laws if they report suspected fraud internally. Specifically, the General Counsel analyzed the propriety of referrals to the Fraud Program under the Privacy Act, asylum confidentiality regulations, and VAWA provisions, and found that the disclosure of information to Fraud Program personnel was permitted. In addition, the General Counsel opined that reporting suspected fraud from a case before an Immigration Judge to the Fraud Program does not create an appearance of impropriety or bias for the adjudicator. For the full text of the General Counsel's legal opinion, see [The EOIR General Counsel's May 17, 2017, Memorandum on Reporting Fraud and Abuse](#)

In Focus:

The HSI Forensic Lab: Open for Business

EOIR's Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program recently visited the newly renovated Homeland Security Investigations Forensic Laboratory, formerly known as the Forensic Document Laboratory. Over the past five years, the Forensic Lab has undergone a million-dollar renovation. Given the Lab's recently expanded capabilities and facilities, it stands ready, willing, and able to accept referrals from DHS. If an Immigration Judge suspects that a document may have been altered or counterfeited, consider requesting the DHS trial attorney in the matter refer the evidence to the Forensic Lab. Their current processing time averages one month.

The Forensic Lab offers a range of services, including the examination of latent prints and questioned documents. For example, clients of the Forensic Lab may submit for review suspicious travel and identity documents (such as passports, visas, driver's licenses, identification cards, and vital records), and the lab will conduct forensic analysis based on the needs of the client. This may include document authentication, identification of alterations, common or same source analysis, handwriting analysis, and other forensic processes. One notable resource at the Forensic Lab is its document reference library,

which houses hundreds of thousands of real and fake worldwide travel and identity documents; the Forensic Lab even helped authenticate several 9/11 hijackers' Saudi Arabian passports. Forensic Lab examiners can also provide expert testimony in administrative and judicial proceedings. The Forensic Lab is accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board.

To learn more about the Forensic Lab, please visit [HSI Forensics Lab](#).

Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by calling or emailing the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly at [REDACTED].

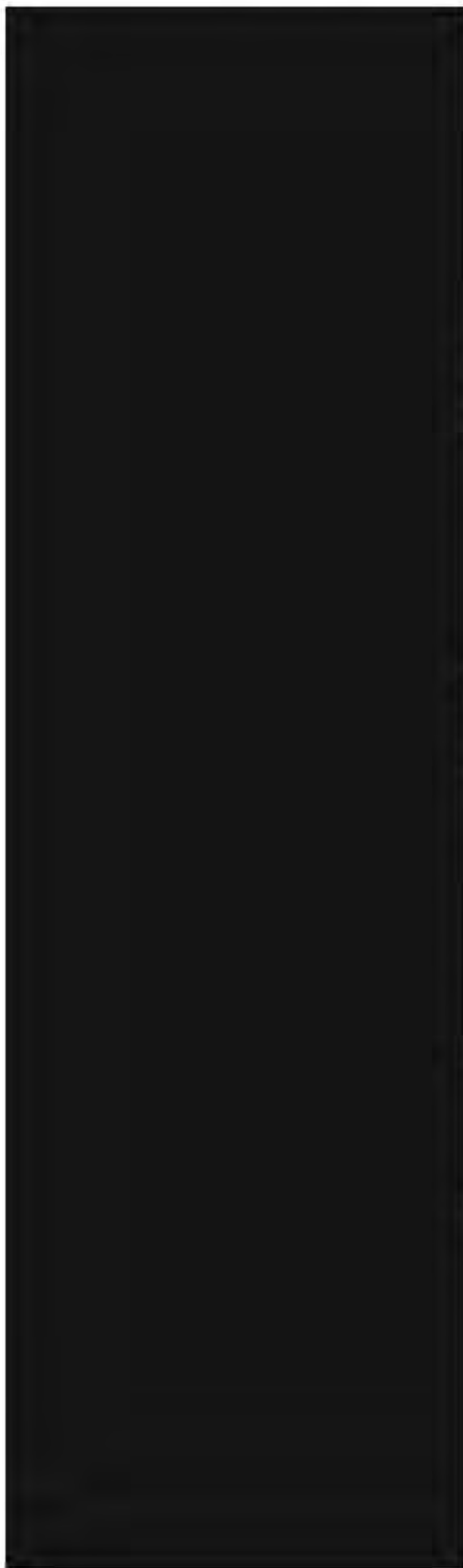
You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- [Nathan Vanderhoofven](#): Attorney Vanderhoofven was suspended from the practice of law by EOIR on October 17, 2017, based upon his suspension by the State of Colorado, in part, due to his facilitation of the unauthorized practice of law.
- [Bilal Khaleeq](#): Attorney Bilal Khaleeq has been charged in the Northern District of Texas for his involvement in a scheme to obtain immigration benefits through marriage fraud.
- [Patience Moyo](#): Ms. Moyo was convicted in Delaware for theft based upon deceiving individuals into believing she was authorized to assist them in their immigration matter and accepting payment for services she did not render.

• [REDACTED]



- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:

- [REDACTED]

Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, please contact our office:

- [REDACTED]

Current Scams

- 42B Receipt for EAD only

Caselaw Update

- Acquaah v. Sessions, No. 16-3277 (7th Cir.)

The Seventh Circuit found that the BIA erred in concluding that James Acquaah was ineligible for a fraud waiver under 8 U.S.C. § 1227(a)(1)(H). In 1984, Acquaah entered the United States on a visitor's visa and later obtained conditional permanent resident status based on a marriage to a United States citizen. His application to remove the conditions on his residency sparked proceedings that have spanned more than twenty-five

years. While those proceedings awaited a decision by the BIA, Acquaah's first marriage ended, he remarried and had a daughter, and he sought and received permanent residency under a different name on the basis of that second marriage. In 2013, after the Department of Homeland Security's motion to reopen deportation proceedings was granted, an IJ found the first marriage fraudulent and that Acquaah was ineligible for a fraud waiver. The fraud waiver finding was upheld by the BIA, which held that Acquaah was ineligible for a fraud waiver because he was being deported for having his residence status terminated, not because of fraud. Acquaah appealed the BIA decision, successfully arguing that, under the language of the statute, waivers can be applied to both formal fraud charges and charges directly resulting from fraud.

- **Abuya v. Sessions, No. 16-3407 (8th Cir.)**

On petition for review, the Eight Circuit agreed that Abuya entered into a marriage for the purpose of evading the immigration laws which resulted in a lifetime bar on the approval of petitions for immigrant status on his behalf. Unrefuted evidence indicated that the USC petitioner in applying for public benefits before, during, and after the marriage represented that she was unmarried and not living with Abuya. Moreover, an investigation by DHS revealed inconsistencies in the factual claims of Abuya and the USC petitioner. The adverse credibility finding was supported by specific, cogent reasons and the testimony and documentary evidence submitted by DHS was substantial evidence that supported the IJ's finding that the marriage of Abuya and the USC petitioner was fraudulent.


Other Immigration Fraud In the News

Two Oregon men sentenced for immigration fraud

Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, reports on fraud

School District Executive Director sentenced in conspiracy to falsify immigration documents

Liberian national found guilty of immigration fraud and perjury



Three government contractors charged with receiving bribes in exchange for the removal of ISAP electronic monitoring devices

President Trump calls for the imposition and enforcement of penalties for frivolous, baseless, or fraudulent asylum applications

Pakistani woman admits to marriage fraud scheme

Chinese national sentenced in connection with college admissions exam scam

ICE fears state court ruling will block jailed illegal immigrants from deportation

The Lookout

February 2018

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 5

Contact Info:

Attn: Brea Burgie
Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program
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Executive Office for Immigration
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(b)(7)(C)

Fraud Program Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Diane Kier

Associate General Counsel

Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Edward Grodin

Judicial Law Clerk

(b)(7)(C)

Investigator

Phillip Rimmer

Attorney General Sessions Addresses Immigration Fraud

In a memorandum to the Executive Office for Immigration Review dated December 5, 2017, and in prepared remarks given on December 12, 2017, Attorney General Jefferson B. Sessions stated that immigration fraud should be documented, reported, and prosecuted.

For the full text of the memorandum and remarks see [Memorandum for the Executive Office for Immigration Review](#) and [Remarks as Prepared for Delivery](#).

In Focus:

In an effort to assist adjudicators in identifying and responding to fraud, the Fraud Program is preparing a series of short overviews of the relevant law on various fraud-related topics. These resources are intended as a reference guide to help adjudicators. The first of this series is included below. As a reminder, adjudicators should also report suspected document fraud to the Fraud Program for enforcement actions against those who perpetrate document fraud, as appropriate.

Document Fraud in Immigration Proceedings: A Brief Overview of the Law

In the course of removal proceedings, Immigration Judges may encounter allegations or proven instances of document fraud. Document fraud can affect immigration adjudications in a variety of ways, from the filing of fraudulent applications to the creation of a basis for removal. This article seeks to provide a brief overview of the law pertaining to document fraud. In particular, the Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program hopes that this article can serve as a quick

Paralegal

Recka Garces

Legal Assistant

REFERRALS:

We rely on your referrals of suspicious activity. Please refer any matter in which you suspect document fraud, application fraud, criminal behavior by a party or representative, the unauthorized practice of law by a non-party, or any other matter implicating fraud and abuse in proceedings.

Federal Resources:

Other Resources:

reference guide of sorts for Immigration Judges dealing with potential or verified document fraud in their cases...

To read more, click here: [Full Article](#)

Making a Referral

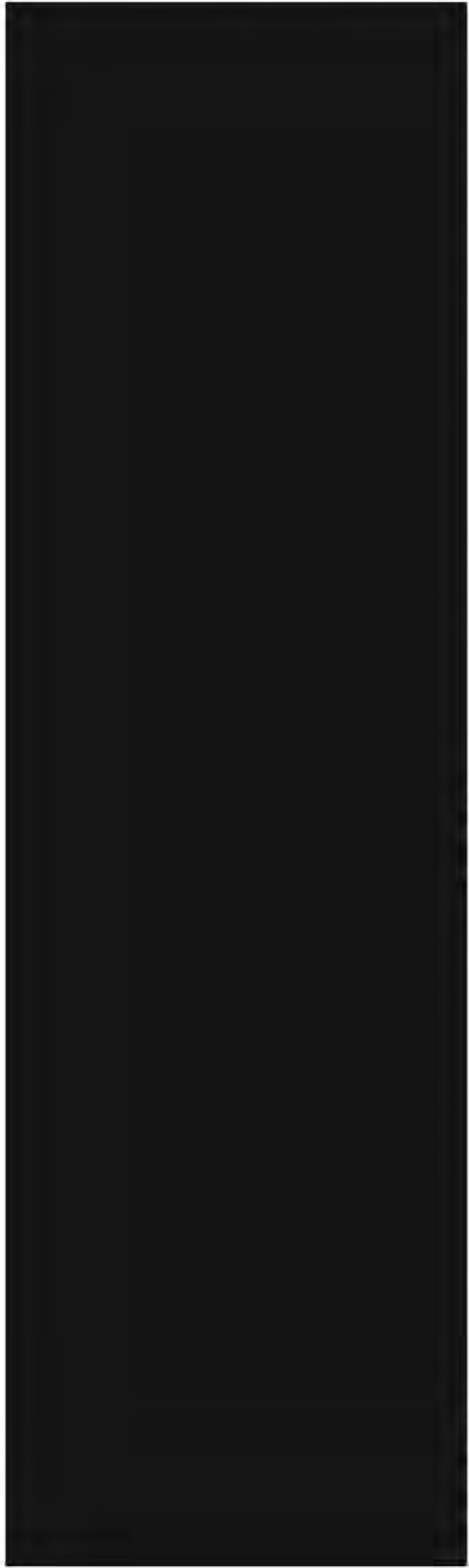
Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by calling or emailing the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly at [REDACTED]

You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- [Divya Khullar, Esq.](#): Mr. Khullar, of Florida, is being sued by the Oregon Attorney General for unlawful trade practices based upon a scheme in which Mr. Khullar allegedly sent non-lawyer associates, including Mr. Emmanuel Rosario and Mr. Alex Pena, to Oregon to engage clients and provide legal advice and assistance for a fee.
- [Emmanuel "Manny" Rosario](#): Mr. Rosario, of Florida, a co-conspirator of Mr. Divya Khullar, is being sued by the Oregon Attorney General for engaging in unlawful trade practices.
- [Alex Pena](#): Mr. Pena, of Florida, a co-conspirator of Mr. Divya Khullar, is being sued by the Oregon Attorney General for engaging in unlawful trade practices.
- [Patrick Snyder](#): Mr. Snyder, of Oregon, a co-conspirator of Mr. Juvenal Vega, was sentenced to 75 months of imprisonment on November 16, 2017, for perpetrating a large-scale immigration fraud and engaging in money laundering violations. More than 90 immigrants were defrauded out of more than \$600,000 between 2009 and 2012.
- [Juvenal Vega](#): Mr. Vega, of Oregon, a co-conspirator of Mr. Patrick Snyder, was sentenced to 41 months of imprisonment on



November 16, 2017, for perpetrating a large-scale immigration fraud and engaging in money laundering violations—more than 90 immigrants were defrauded out of more than \$600,000 between 2009 and 2012.

- Michael Ruiz: Mr. Ruiz (along with his co-conspirator, Mr. James Mondell), of South Carolina, was sentenced to over 13 years' incarceration after pleading guilty on September 20, 2017, for crimes arising from his scheme of stealing from immigrants by pretending to be a federal agent.
- Efrain Vargas: Mr. Vargas has been charged by the Nassau County, New York, District Attorney with multiple felony counts, including grand larceny, immigrant assistance services fraud, and scheme to defraud, as well as misdemeanor counts for posing as an attorney, arising from his alleged actions in posing as an attorney and promising to help multiple victims with their immigration issues while taking their money and never performing any of the contracted work.
- Jose William Vega: Mr. Vega, who is no longer licensed to practice law in Texas, has been charged by the Harris County District Attorney in Houston, Texas with posing as an attorney and not performing contracted work.
- More

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:



Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, please contact our office:



Current Scams

- [Impersonating EOIR Employees- Scams by Letter](#)
- [Impersonating EOIR Employees- EOIR 1-800 Information Line Phone Scams](#)
- [Impersonating EOIR Employees- EOIR Fraud Investigator](#)
- [Impersonating Other Government Employees](#)
- [42B Receipt for EAD only](#)

Recent Prosecutions Involving EOIR

- [U.S. v. Cameron](#)
- [State of Texas v. Jose William Vega](#)

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

[Seattle Chief Counsel charged with stealing immigrant IDs](#)

[Aiding or exploiting - Bad legal advice from unlicensed practitioners](#)

[Illegal or fraudulent entry into the U.S. and its effect on asylum](#)

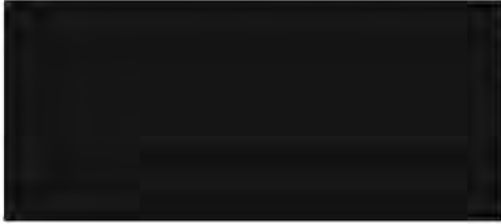
[Long Island catering hall manager and owner indicted for visa fraud and forced labor in labor trafficking scheme](#)

[Woman sentenced and denaturalized for obtaining U.S. citizenship through lies](#)

[Elk Grove Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for \\$1M Adult Adoption Immigration Fraud Scheme](#)

[Woman Sentenced And Denaturalized For Obtaining U.S. Citizenship By Lying To Officials](#)

[United States Citizens And Illegal Aliens Charged In Marriage Fraud Ring](#)



Immigration Attorney Pleads Guilty to Fraud Scheme and Identity Theft in Relation to Visa Applications

The Lookout

April 2018

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 6

Contact Info:

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Public E-mail:

Fraud Program Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Edward Grodin

Judicial Law Clerk

Investigator

Recka Garces

Legal Assistant

Recent Fraud Prosecutions:

People v. Alice Madera

[REDACTED] the Kern County District Attorney's office entered into a plea bargain with Ms. Madera to charges stemming from her unauthorized practice before the Los Angeles and San Francisco Immigration Courts. Ms. Madera received a suspended one-year sentence and 5 years probation, and with the additional terms that she stay away from all courts, ICE facilities, and all prisons/jails, be referred to mental health with counseling as required, prohibited from referring or holding herself out as an attorney or as a government agent, and 250 hours community service. Any violation of the terms, which are designed to prevent her from continuing to engage in the unauthorized practice of immigration law, will constitute a probation violation.

U.S. v. Dumitru

[REDACTED] Andreea Dumitru, an immigration attorney based in Queens, New York, has been charged by the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York with asylum fraud and making false statements. Specifically, between 2012 and 2017, Ms. Dumitru is alleged to have submitted over 180 fraudulent asylum applications in which she knowingly made false statements and representations about, among other things, the applicants' criminal histories, personal narratives of alleged persecution, and/or locations.

Special Recognition

The Fraud Program would like to recognize the following EOIR offices for their stellar work reporting suspected fraud in February and March:

REFERRALS:

We rely on your referrals of suspicious activity. Please refer any matter in which you suspect document fraud, application fraud, criminal behavior by a party or representative, the unauthorized practice of law by a non-party, or any other matter implicating fraud and abuse in proceedings.

- Atlanta Immigration Court
- Cleveland Immigration Court
- Dallas Immigration Court
- Denver Immigration Court
- Los Angeles Immigration Court
- Office of Legal Access Programs

Fraud Program Visits Continue to Immigration Courts

In accordance with our regulatory mandate, the Fraud Program conducts training with Immigration Judges and other EOIR employees on an ongoing basis and also coordinates with and provides assistance to federal and state law enforcement officials and disciplinary authorities to ensure that cases of fraud and abuse are appropriately investigated and prosecuted. As part of the Fraud Program's ongoing efforts, in coordination with supervising Assistant Chief Immigration Judges and Court Administrators, and with the assistance of Public Information Officers from EOIR's Communications and Legislative Affairs Division, this winter and early spring representatives of the Fraud Program have visited the Immigration Courts in Cleveland, Dallas, Portland, Orlando, and Varick Street in New York City to conduct training and to meet with local stakeholders.

The Fraud Program has now conducted training at over half of the Immigration Courts. Upcoming trainings have been scheduled for Kansas City, Omaha, Salt Lake City, and Memphis, and the remaining trainings are expected to be completed before the end of this fiscal year.

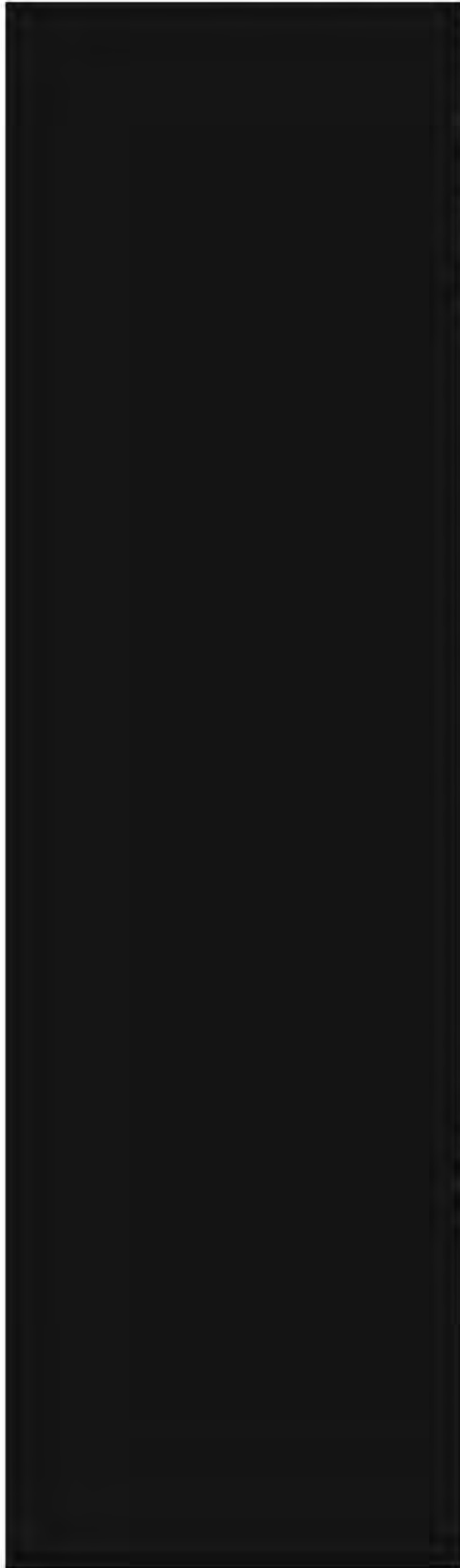
Federal Resources:

Other Resources:

Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by calling or emailing the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly at [REDACTED]

You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud



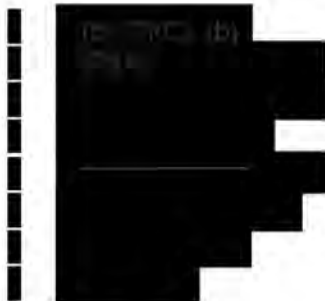
Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- Andreea Dumitru: Ms. Dumitru has been charged in the Southern District of New York with knowingly making false representations and statements in over 180 asylum applications filed on behalf of her clients.
- Marvin Smith: Mr. Smith, of Florida, has been charged with filing false labor certifications and petitions for over 300 beneficiaries.
- Alejandro Gurany: Mr. Gurany, of Texas, was sentenced to prison based upon a scheme in which he collected thousands of dollars from immigrants across the U.S. after telling them he worked for a government immigration office and could provide the immigrants with legal status for a fee.
- Angel Buitron: Mr. Buitron, of New York entered into a settlement agreement with the New York Department of Consumer Affairs, for violations of the City's Consumer Protection Law and the laws regulating immigration assistance services providers, including engaging in deceptive and illegal trade practices to profit from immigrant consumers. The settlement agreement requires Buitron to pay \$150,000 in fines and secures \$34,050 in restitution for the consumers identified in this case.
- More

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:



Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, please contact our office:



Current Scams

- Fraudulent Immigration Court Removal Order demanding payment
- Impersonating EOIR Employees- EOIR 1-800 Information Line Phone Scams
- 42B Receipt for EAD only

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

Immigration attorney charged for pursuing 180 bogus asylum applications

Government contractor who took bribes to remove immigrants' ankle monitors gets prison

Three men convicted of mail fraud, fraud in foreign labor contracting, and visa fraud


Orlando Man files Fraudulent Immigration Petitions Resulting in over 300 improper Temporary Workers

Florida developer and Real Estate Attorney scam foreign investors

Texas man goes to prison for scamming immigrants

New Jersey legal advocates warn about notario fraud

Basketball academy founder pleads guilty to conspiracy to commit visa fraud



Massachusetts Attorney General launches notario fraud educational campaign

H1B visa fraud for information technology staffing in New Jersey

H2B visa fraud for construction industry workers in Illinois

Fraud scheme to facilitate unauthorized employment in Florida construction industry

Firm accused of preying on detained immigrants faces widening investigation

The Lookout

June 2018

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 7

Contact Info:

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 Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program
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(b) (7)

Public Phone: (877) 388-3840

Public E-mail:

(b) (7)

Fraud Program Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Edward Grodin

Judicial Law Clerk

(b) (7)

Investigator

Recka Garces

Legal Assistant

From the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys

This article, "Defending Agency Immigration Fraud Adjudications," was originally published in the United States Attorneys Bulletin, July 2017, Civil Immigration Enforcement and the Office of Immigration Litigation - District Court Section.

[A]n unfortunate reality that makes immigration cases so different from all other American adjudications: Fraud, forgery and fabrication are so common □ and so difficult to prove □ that they are routinely tolerated.¹

The federal government is responsible for ensuring that persons eligible for immigration benefits receive them in a timely manner while at the same time ensuring that aliens ineligible for such benefits do not obtain them through fraudulent means, in the absence of lawful entitlement. This article addresses two broad categories of immigration fraud: benefit application fraud and document fraud.² To successfully defend such cases in federal court, it is essential to understand the nature of fraud schemes, which largely turn on misrepresentation related to underlying eligibility for an immigration benefit as well as the individual's justification for committing such unlawful acts. As Judge Kozinski keenly observed, immigration fraud is so pervasive □ a □ deplorable state of affairs □ □ because the benefit is disproportionately high relative to the low risk and repercussions of being caught.³ This article will serve as a roadmap for identifying immigration fraud and a guide for defending agency fraud adjudications and protecting the integrity of our immigration system...

¹ *Angov v. Lynch*, 788 F.3d 893, 901 (9th Cir. 2015) (Kozinski, J.), cert. denied, 136 S. Ct. 896 (2016).

REFERRALS:

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Federal Resources:

Other Resources:

2 Fraud is "[a] knowing misrepresentation or knowing concealment of a material fact made to induce another to act to his or her detriment." Fraud, BLACK'S LAW DICTIONARY (10th ed. 2014).

3 "[The schizophrenic way we administer our immigration laws creates an environment where lying and forgery are difficult to disprove, richly rewarded if successful and rarely punished if unsuccessful. This toxic combination creates a moral hazard to which many . . . applicants fall prey. First, the reward: the opportunity to be lawfully admitted into the United States. Those born with U.S. citizenship cannot imagine what this is worth to the world's poor and oppressed billions, most of whom would come here tomorrow if they could. Gaining a lawful foothold in America is an incalculable benefit. It sets an immigrant on the path to a peaceful life in a free society, economic prosperity, citizenship and the opportunity to bring family members in due course. A prize like this is worth a great deal of expense and risk. Telling an elaborate lie, and coming up with forged documents and mendacious witnesses to back it up, is nothing at all when the stakes are so high." *Angov*, 788 F.3d at 901.

For the full text of the article, see page 87, "[Defending Agency Immigration Fraud Adjudications](#)," by Anthony D. Bianco, Michael A. Celone, and Sherease Pratt.

Iranian National Sentenced for Asylum Fraud

On June 6, 2018, in the United States District Court for the District of Arizona, Ali Vahdani Pour, a 28-year-old Iranian national, was sentenced to 137 days in prison after pleading guilty to false swearing in an immigration matter. Mr. Pour admitted having lied on his asylum application when he falsely denied having served in the Iranian military and falsely denied having received refugee status in another country. On the contrary, Mr. Pour admitted to having served in the Iranian military and to receiving refugee status in Italy prior to seeking asylum in the United States.

ICE's National Lead Development Center

As part of the implementation of the president's Executive Order No. 13768, ICE has formed their National Lead Development Center ("NLDC"), headquartered in Vermont, to focus on immigration fraud and refer those cases to appropriate Document and Benefit Fraud Task Forces throughout the United States. Many of the referrals made by the Fraud Program will be directed toward the NLDC as part of our

regulatory responsibility under 8 C.F.R. § 1003.0(e)(2) to coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security with respect to the identification of and response to fraud.

Fraud Program Facilitates Plenary Session on Adjudicating Fraud before EOIR

The Fraud and Abuse Program facilitated a plenary session on adjudicating fraud at the EOIR Legal Training Program. The panel featured two distinguished speakers, along with Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel, Brea Burgie. First, Immigration Judge Rachel Ruane spoke about adjudicating fraudulent cases from an immigration judge's perspective and how she works with the Fraud Program. Second, Jim Ross, Chief of the Questioned Documents Unit at the ICE HSI Forensic Lab, provided an overview of how the Lab analyzes suspected fraudulent documents. Finally, Brea Burgie discussed how and when to report suspected fraud to the Fraud Program, as well as current trends in fraud reported to the Fraud Program. Slides from the presentation are attached to the email accompanying this edition of the Lookout.

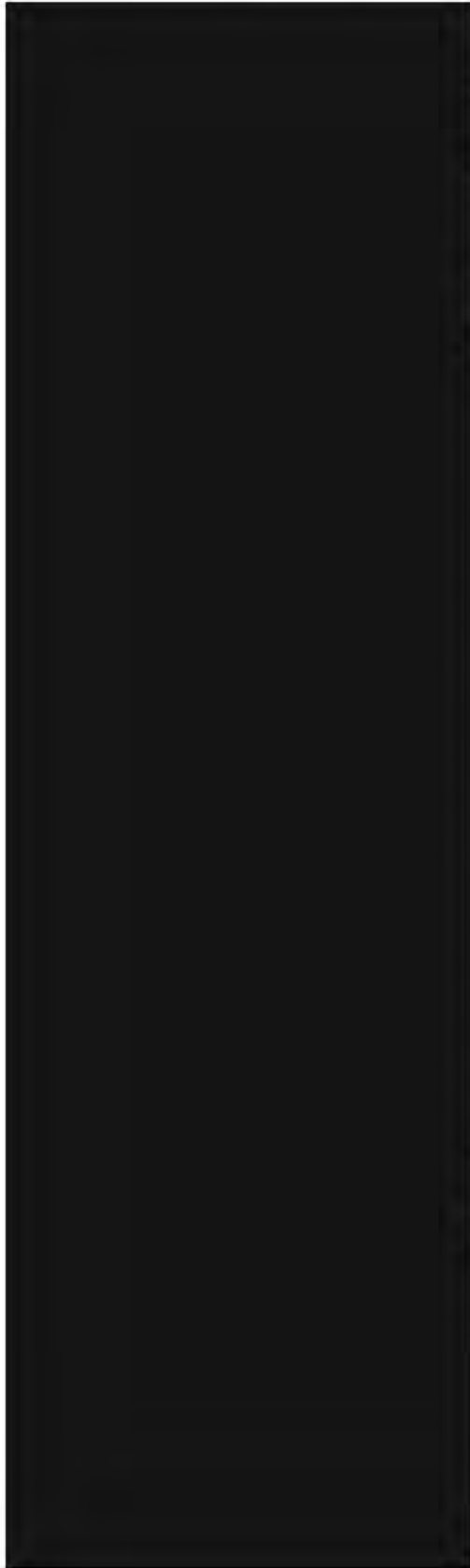
Fraud Time Machine

A decade, and three Presidents ago, the challenge to the immigration system presented by fraudulent schemes was markedly different, or was it? For those new to the job, or whose memories have dimmed with time, peruse the compilation of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys in the November 2008 United States Attorneys Bulletin issue dedicated to exploring "[Immigration Legal Initiatives](#)."

Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by calling or emailing the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly at [REDACTED]


You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new,



dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- 
- Jodian Stephenson: Mr. Stephenson (along with his co-conspirator Mr. Donovan Lawrence), of Connecticut, was charged on June 22, 2018, with various federal offenses related to an extensive marriage fraud scheme which included the submission of false documents, including tax returns, and fraudulent applications.
- Madeline Singas: Ms. Singas was arrested in Nassau County, New York, on June 7, 2018, and arraigned on charges of stealing thousands of dollars from migrants with a "bogus promise of assistance with citizenship, green cards, and employment."
- Marash Mernacaj: Mr. Mernacaj was convicted in the Southern District of New York for his preparation of numerous fraudulent asylum applications, and also was charged with involvement in preparing false medical waivers.
- More

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:

- 

Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, please contact our office:

-



Current Scams

- Fraudulent Immigration Court Removal Order demanding payment
- Impersonating EOIR Employees- EOIR 1-800 Information Line Phone Scams
- 42B Receipt for EAD only

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

Immigrants claim their attorneys defrauded them and they may be deported

Pennsylvania disbars former ICE attorney who stole immigrants' IDs

Owner of Queens Medical Employment Agency Indicted for Visa Fraud Conspiracy


Brooklyn Woman Sentenced for Mail Fraud Relating to Cw-1 Applications for Foreign Workers

Airline Staffing Executive Sentenced to Prison for Years of Immigration Fraud

Mexican National Arrested for Allegedly Creating and Selling Fraudulent Immigration Documents

Somali man who settled in Maine accused of using another man's name to apply for papers

Man suspected of Bosnian war crimes will leave US



Two Las Vegas Residents Plead Guilty To Conspiracy To Commit Marriage Fraud

Polk County Woman Sentenced For Obtaining U.S. Citizenship By Fraud And False Statements

Mexican National Indicted for Immigration Document Fraud, Aggravated Identity Theft

Winter Haven resident sentenced to prison, has citizenship revoked for filing for asylum under false name

Ghanaian National Sentenced for False Statements and Unlawful Attempt to Procure Citizenship

Cedarhurst Woman Arrested for Allegedly Stealing Nearly \$40,000 from Immigrants

Guatemalan National Charged With Making False Statement on Passport Application

Two Connecticut Residents Charged with Operating Extensive Immigration Marriage Fraud Scheme

Court of Appeals Upholds Conviction and Sentence of Rwandan Refugee Who Actively Participated in the Rwandan Genocide

Ex-Immigration Atty Wants New Trial Over False Billing Scam

THE LOOKOUT

October 2018

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 8

Contact Info:

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(703) 756-8156
Brea.Burgie@usdoj.gov

Public Phone: (877) 388-3840

Public E-mail:
EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov

Fraud Program [Intranet](#) Page

Fraud Program [Internet](#) Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Edward Grodin

Judicial Law Clerk

Investigator

Legal Assistant

REFERRALS:

We rely on your referrals of suspicious activity. Please refer any matter in which you suspect document fraud, application fraud, criminal behavior by a party or representative, the

Recent Prosecutions

Forms Direct, Inc

Forms Direct, Inc. entered into a settlement agreement with the Federal Trade Commission on October 16, 2018, for \$2.2 million. The FTC brought the enforcement action against Forms Direct after the company engaged in misleading marketing that misled consumers to believe it was affiliated with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. It also misled customers into paying for USCIS forms that were free on the USCIS website. The FTC brought this actions after FL and TX had brought similar actions and obtained injunctions. See [Immigration Center Pays \\$2.2 M to Settle Gov't Imposter Claim](#).

Leaford George Cameron

Mr. Cameron was sentenced on July 11, 2018, to 12 years in prison based upon his actions constituting the unauthorized practice of law through operating a fake law practice for over a decade during which he appeared in courts, including the Philadelphia Immigration Court, as a legal representative based upon false claims that he was licensed to practice law. The Fraud Program assisted with both the investigation into Mr. Cameron's crime and his prosecution, including providing witness testimony in his criminal proceeding. See [Cherry Hill Courier-Post](#)

Marivel Cantu-Madril

Ms. Cantu-Madril, an attorney in Tucson, Arizona, was arraigned on July 13, 2018, on an indictment charging her with mail fraud and forgery. The Fraud Program began assisting Homeland Security Investigations in investigating Ms. Cantu-Madril on October 13, 2016. Ms. Cantu-Madril is alleged to have doctored USCIS and Ninth Circuit filings after a broader investigation that included creating fraudulent EOIR hearing notices to defraud clients. Evidence in the investigation was also provided by Tucson Immigration Judges. For more information - [DOJ Press Release](#)

[REDACTED]

After receiving an outside complaint that [REDACTED] was engaged in the unauthorized practice of law, the Fraud Program sent him a cease and desist letter on May 21, 2018, and referred the matter to Bar Counsel for the Florida Bar's Unlicensed Practice of Law Department for Miami, Florida. In July 2018, the Florida Bar reported that [REDACTED]

unauthorized practice of law by a non-party, or any other matter implicating fraud and abuse in proceedings.

had closed his office and signed a cease and desist agreement with the Florida Bar.

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

Federal Resources:

[Attorney Discipline List](#)

[Check Attorney Licensing](#)

[Recognition and Accreditation](#)

[USCIS Avoid Scams](#)

[FTC Materials](#)

Other Resources:

[CARECEN FAQ](#)

[PINY](#)

[CLINIC](#)

[AILA](#)

- [REDACTED]: The Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Committee in Chicago is prosecuting [REDACTED] on a state criminal contempt charge for the unauthorized practice of law.
- [REDACTED]: On August 27, 2018, The Fraud Program notified [REDACTED] to cease and desist the unauthorized practice of immigration law after he improperly identified himself as an accredited representative in seeking to e-register on August 13, 2018.
- [REDACTED]: On August 24, 2018, The Fraud Program notified [REDACTED] to cease and desist the unauthorized practice of immigration law after he improperly identified himself as an accredited representative affiliated with the Immigrant Defenders Law Center in seeking to e-register on August 13, 2018.
- [REDACTED]: After referral by the Fraud Program in July 2018 to the Florida Bar's Unlicensed Practice of Law Department for Miami, Florida, [REDACTED] closed his office and signed a cease and desist agreement with the Florida Bar.
- [REDACTED]: On October 19, 2018, the Manhattan District Attorney indicted this former immigration attorney for the unauthorized practice of law and promising immigrants "10-Year Green Cards."
- [More](#)

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:



Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, [please contact our office:](#)



Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by calling or emailing the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly at (703) 756-8156 or Brea.Burgie@usdoj.gov.

You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Articles

Corruption and the Smuggling of Migrants

"Fraudulent documentation often plays a major role in migrant smuggling schemes and corruption plays an important role in the production and use of fraudulent documents. One form of documentation fraud involves the buying of passports and visas through corrupt officials in embassies. According to the Programme against Corruption and Organised Crime (PACO), corrupt members of staff at Western embassies may be involved in this form of fraud. In some countries, because of weaknesses in government administration, inefficiency and widespread corruption, it is relatively easy to get genuine documents with partially or completely false information in exchange for a bribe.

Some of the technological advances to protect the integrity of official identification and travel documents can be defeated by corruption. For example, the replacement of a bio-data page in a passport requires the involvement of a person with access to specialized techniques. However, it may be much easier for a corrupt official to issue documents by fraud rather than to alter a document. Fraudulent supporting documents may be used to obtain a genuine passport or visa.

Corrupt officials may agree not to scrutinize these documents too carefully or may even agree to certify certain documents that they know have been forged or altered. In fact, corruption often ensures that poor-quality falsified or fraudulent documents are not submitted for careful inspection.

Document fraud, often facilitated by corrupt officials, can significantly affect the credibility of the official documentation issued by certain governments and agencies and affect all who are relying on such documents (passports, visas, etc.) to move and travel to other countries or to conduct their business. There are examples of documents from certain countries being blacklisted by other countries or subjected to additional or lengthy verifications for this reason..."

Excerpted from "Issue Paper: Corruption and the Smuggling of Migrants", United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013.

A View from Ghana

"..In Ghana, visa fraud is bold and without shame, and it is rising. Ghana has become something of the West African capital for visa fraud, owed in part to the fact that the penalties for it are milder than they are in other west African countries. So over the past few decades, Ghanaian visa fraudsters have built expertise - passport forgeries, fake visas, forged residence permits, altered biography pages.

There's also the demand: an increasing number of Ghanaians are looking to move abroad—temporarily, or permanently – for economic opportunities, and are willing to spend money on visas. People spend up to \$30,000 to pay for fraudulent visas, even selling their houses to do so. Nigerians can relate too...

Oh for God's sake. Look things are bad in Nigeria right now. And people would like to leave. But please do it legally, before they shut off passage to every single person from Africa..." - Excerpted from Konbini.com article by Olanrewaju Eweniyi

Full article at Konbini.com

Technology Being used to Foil Fraud

"..US Customs and Border Protection, part of the Department of Homeland Security, said Dulles is one of 14 "early adopter airports" using facial recognition technology for the entry process, and began deploying it Monday.

On Wednesday, a 26-year-old man traveling from Sao Paulo, Brazil sought to enter with a French passport but the facial comparison biometric system determined he was not a match to the passport he presented.

A search revealed the man's authentic Republic of Congo identification card concealed in his shoe. His name was not released..."

Excerpted from - AFP Report

Current Scams

- Fraudulent Immigration Court Removal Order demanding payment
- Impersonating EOIR Employees- EOIR 1-800 Information Line Phone Scams
- 42B Receipt for EAD only

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

Filipino Woman Sentenced for Time Served for Passport Fraud

[Mexican Citizen Pleads Guilty to Faking His Own Kidnapping in an Attempt to Obtain an Immigration Visa](#)

[Greenville Woman Guilty of Fraud Involving Immigration](#)

[Three Nigerian Nationals living in Grambling and Texas plead guilty to roles in marriage fraud scheme](#)

[Illegal Alien Pleads Guilty to US Visa Fraud](#)

[Ethiopian Human Rights abuses could cost man U.S. citizenship](#)

[Former Nazi Labor Camp Guard Jakiw Palij Removed to Germany](#)

[Ethiopian Human Rights Abuser Arrested for Fraudulently Obtaining U.S. Citizenship](#)

[Alleged Human Rights Abuser Arrested for Naturalization Fraud](#)

[Middlesex County man arrested and charged with attempting to obtain U.S. citizenship through fraud](#)

[Tucson migrants arrested for immigration fraud](#)

[Coney Island Man Indicted for Posing as Immigrant Assistance Service Provider and Filing Dozens of Allegedly Fraudulent Asylum Applications \(needs link to Kings county da press release 8/9/email\)](#)

[North Carolina man sentenced on immigration and tax fraud charges](#)

[DOJ, DOL To Target Employers Abusing Foreign Worker Visas](#)

[Jury Finds Kazakhstani Man Guilty Of Marriage Fraud And Uzbekistani Man Pleads Guilty To Marriage Fraud As Part Of Marriage Fraud Ring Investigation](#)

[California Attorney, Victoria Chan, Accused Again Of EB-5 Scam In \\$2.3M Suit](#)

[5th Circuit Denies Brothers Convicted Of Visa Fraud A New Trial](#)

[Texas Federal Judge Sentences 8 In India Call Center Scam](#)

[Ethiopian Diplomat Arrested On Visa Fraud Charges](#)

[Vermont Ski Resort Owners To Pay \\$2.1M In EB-5 Fraud Case](#)

[Bolivian Man Pleads Guilty to Obtaining U.S. Citizenship by Fraud](#)

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"UNCLASSIFIED"

12/2/2022

THE LOOKOUT

December 2018

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 9

Contact Info:

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Fraud Program [Intranet](#) Page

Fraud Program [Internet](#) Page

Brea Burgie

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

Paul Monsky

Associate General Counsel

Edward Grodin

Associate General Counsel

Investigator

Legal Assistant

REFERRALS:

We rely on your referrals of suspicious activity. Please refer any matter in which you suspect document fraud, application fraud, criminal behavior by a party or representative, the

Recent Prosecutions

Andreea Dumitru

Following a jury trial in the Southern District of New York, Andreea Dumitru, aka Andrea Dumitru Parcalaboiu, from Queens, NY, was found guilty of three charges stemming from the filing of fraudulent asylum applications. She was accused of filing more than 100 fraudulent applications between March 2013 and 2017. Those allegations included making false statements in the applicants' personal narratives in their asylum applications regarding the persecution they allegedly endured, and their criminal and travel histories. She was also accused of forging her clients' signatures and falsely notarizing affidavits. She was convicted of one count of asylum fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, one count of making false statements, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison, and one count of aggravated identity theft, which carries a mandatory consecutive sentence of two years in prison.

In the U.S. Attorney's press release, Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said: "*Andreea Dumitru, an immigration attorney, scammed the asylum program, which was designed to provide safe harbor for the world's most vulnerable people. She will now serve time in prison for her crimes.*"

The Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program provided substantial assistance in this case during the investigative and trial phases. This included providing statistics and EOIR documents during the investigation, and procuring and preparing the testimony of retired Immigration Judge Rose Peters for the trial. Judge Peters testified primarily regarding the importance of the accuracy of the information on the I-589 before the immigration court and the impact that false information on the I-589 would have on an adjudication before the court.

See [U.S. Attorney Press Release](#)

Leaford Cameron (update)

Leaford Cameron, who was convicted in July 2018 in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania of charges stemming from unlawfully holding himself out as an attorney, was ordered on December 7 to pay restitution to 40 victims in the amount of \$138,758.38. Cameron was accused of defrauding 105 clients, and the prosecutors sought restitution for 51 of those individuals in the amount of \$167,123.85. The court ultimately found that the prosecutors had provided "sufficient

unauthorized practice of law by a non-party, or any other matter implicating fraud and abuse in proceedings.

[ly] reliable evidence to support a restitution order" for 40 of the victims.

Fraud Program Updates

Federal Resources:

[Attorney Discipline List](#)

[Check Attorney Licensing](#)

[Recognition and Accreditation](#)

[USCIS Avoid Scams](#)

[FTC Materials](#)

Other Resources:

[CARECEN FAQ](#)

[PINY](#)

[CLINIC](#)

[AILA](#)

Pilot Program Begins for Fraud Points of Contact in Five Immigration Courts

An Attorney Advisor in the Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Chicago, and New York Immigration Courts is being designated as a point of contact to liaison with the Office of General Counsel's Fraud Program in identifying possible fraud occurring in the respective courts. The designated Attorney Advisors will receive training from Fraud Program personnel and regularly communicate with the Fraud Program regarding local concerns. We will be providing additional information to those courts regarding referring matters to their POCs in the near future.

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- [\[REDACTED\]](#), an attorney in North Carolina, was indicted by the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina in November for knowingly aiding and abetting an undocumented immigrant to pursue immigration benefits under a false identity.
- [\[REDACTED\]](#), of Round Rock, Texas, has been arrested and charged with falsely holding herself out as an attorney.
- [\[REDACTED\]](#) was disbarred in EOIR Disciplinary proceedings on November 1, 2018, effective September 11, 2018, based on his conviction for conspiracy to commit marriage fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371.
- [More](#)

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:

[REDACTED]

Addresses of Concern (addresses where unauthorized practice of law is suspected):

If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, [please contact our office](#):

[REDACTED]

- [More](#)

Current Scams

- [Impersonating EOIR Employees- new phone scam reported](#)
- [BBB Warns About Immigration Service Scams](#)

Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by calling or emailing the Fraud Counsel, Brea Burgie, directly at (703) 756-8156 or Brea.Burgie@usdoj.gov.

You may also refer members of the public to our public email box at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or provide them with our new, dedicated number: (877) 388-3840. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Fraud-Related News

Thousands Could Be Deported As Government Targets Asylum Mills' Clients

"...For years, the Chinese have won more asylum cases than immigrants from any other country. About 22 percent of the 20,455 individuals granted asylum in 2016 were Chinese immigrants, according to the most recent figures from USCIS. The next largest group is immigrants from El Salvador (10 percent) and then immigrants from Guatemala (about 9 percent).

The lawyer who ran the immigration office Lawrence joined back in 2007 was named Ken Giles. Lawrence says Giles' law office had only three desks, crammed into a tiny room. Everything that happened, Lawrence says, happened out in the open.

'I realized this is open secret in Chinese immigrant community ... many Chinese people making asylum fraud,' he says...

Excerpted from NPR's Planet Money "Special Report: Asylum Crackdown." To read the full article, click here - [NPR Special Report](#)

Indians Arrested for Illegally Entering the U.S. Nearly Triples

Reuters reports that economic migrants from India are paying smuggling rings \$25,000-\$50,000 to assist them in illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border and claiming asylum. A large number are economic migrants with potentially fraudulent asylum petitions.

To read the full September 28, 2018, article, click here - [Reuters](#)

Immigrants Claim Lawyers Defrauded Them and They May Be Deported

"At the time, Martin Torres Reyes thought he had found a path to a green card.

It was early 2015, and Mr. Torres, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico, heard about a lawyer who was promising legal permanent residency to people who had lived in the United States for 10 years and had American-born children.

Mr. Torres went to see the lawyer, Thomas T. Hecht, at his Times Square office, and for an initial fee of \$750, the lawyer said that he would get a work permit in six months, and then some time later, the green card.

According to a lawsuit filed late Wednesday in Federal District Court in Manhattan, this was fraud. Mr. Hecht and his son, Leonard H. Hecht, the complaint said, tricked Mr. Reyes and at least 25 other undocumented immigrants from New York..."

Excerpted from May 3, 2018, New York Times Article. To read the full article click here - [New York Times](#)

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

Former El Paso C.B.P. Inspector Pleads Guilty to Federal Wire Fraud Charge

NJ Division of Consumer Affairs Takes Action Against Dozens of "Notarios" Fraudulently Offering Immigration Services

Couple Seeks 9th Circ. Redo On \$35M EB-5 Fraud Judgment

Hampden Woman Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Commit Marriage Fraud

Worcester Man Sentenced for Marriage Fraud

Honduran National Charged with Making a False Statement to a Federal Agency

Guam Resident Sentenced for Marriage Fraud

South Bay Resident Charged With Visa Fraud And Mail Fraud

Mexican citizen living in Marion sentenced to 54 months in prison for operating document mill that produced 1,000 false identification documents, as well as stealing the identity of another

FBI Briefing Over 'Visa Fraud' Sting in Bahamas

2023-01424

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"UNCLASSIFIED"

12/2/2022

THE LOOKOUT

March 2019

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program, Volume 1, Number 10

Contact Info:

Attn: Brea Burgie
 Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program
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 Executive Office for Immigration
 Review
 5107 Leesburg Pike
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Public Phone: (877) 388-3840

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Fraud and Abuse Prevention Counsel

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Associate General Counsel

Edward Grodin

Associate General Counsel



Investigator



Legal Assistant

REFERRALS:

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Recent Prosecutions

Judith Gil

On January 8, 2019, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office announced the filing of 17 criminal charges against Judith Gil and her daughter, Minerva Gil, for the unauthorized practice of immigration law, grand theft, witness intimidation and harassment, and other criminal offenses based on her alleged operation of an illegal immigration consulting business that has preyed upon individuals seeking residency, asylum, and other forms of legal status in the United States.

The Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program received numerous complaints regarding Ms. Gil and provided substantial assistance in this case during the investigative phase. We will continue to provide assistance as the case moves through the prosecution. Ms. Gil is listed as the preparer on a substantial number of applications, particularly before the Los Angeles Immigration Court.

See [LA Sentinel](#); [L. A. City Attorney Press Release](#)

Eddie Rivas Bonilla


Mr. Bonilla has been charged by the Los Angeles City Attorney with improperly acting as an immigration services provider and the unauthorized practice of law.

The Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program provided supporting documentation for the prosecution.

See [LA Sentinel](#); [L. A. City Attorney Press Release](#)

Lookout List

Persons of Concern (known or suspected individuals engaging in fraud or unauthorized practice of law). Click on each individual's name for more information, and click on the "More" link for other names:

- , have been charged with unauthorized practice of immigration law, grand theft, witness intimidation and harassment, and other criminal offenses based on their alleged operation of an illegal immigration consulting business.

unauthorized practice of law by a non-party, or any other matter implicating fraud and abuse in proceedings.

- [REDACTED] has been charged with improperly acting as an immigration services provider and the unauthorized practice of law.
- Byron Castillo: Orange County District Attorney David M. Hoovler announced that on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, Byron Castillo, 37, formerly of Middletown, New York, pleaded guilty before Orange County Court Judge Robert H. Freehill to Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, in connection with a scheme to defraud recent immigrants by false promises of expedited immigration proceedings.
- [REDACTED], of Round Rock, Texas, has been arrested and charged with falsely holding herself out as an attorney. [REDACTED] is alleged to have told undocumented immigrants she could help them with the legal process to become citizens even though she was not legally permitted to provide such assistance.
- More

Federal Resources:

Attorney Discipline List

Check Attorney Licensing

Recognition and Accreditation

USCIS Avoid Scams

FTC Materials

Other Resources:

CARECEN FAQ

PINY

CLINIC

AILA

The following individuals were notified to cease and desist after improperly seeking to e-Register as accredited representatives and are also identified as Persons of Concern:



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If you see suspicious activity, particularly activity indicating unauthorized practice of law, please contact our office:



Current Scams

- False Phone Calls
- Impersonating EOIR Employees- new phone scam reported
- BBB Warns About Immigration Service Scams

Making a Referral

Please refer any suspicions of fraud, immigration scams, or unauthorized practitioners to the Fraud Program. You can do so by calling or emailing the Fraud Program at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or calling our hotline at (877) 388-3840. This contact information is available to the public, as well. This line is staffed by Fraud Program personnel, who are either bilingual in English/Spanish or have access to the Language Line interpreters.

Fraud-Related News

TRAC releases report titled, "Importance of Nationality in Immigration Bond Decisions"

In a report released on February 12, 2018, the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University, which self-identifies as non-partisan, asserted that the chances of being granted bond at hearings before Immigration Judges varied markedly by nationality, as did required bond amounts, and characterized the differences as striking.

The report indicates that persons in immigration proceedings who are of Indian or Chinese nationality have a better chance of getting a bond than individuals of Latin American nationalities, but notes that the average bond of Indian and Chinese nationals is higher than the average bond amount for other nationalities. In footnotes to the report, TRAC suggested hearing location and Immigration Judge bias as possible reasons for the disparity.

One reason not accounted for in TRAC's statistical analysis, and their framing of their results, is the individual criminal history of the individual known to authorities at the time of the custody hearing. However, another, less obvious, reason may account, in large part, for the differences TRAC identifies. For decades, migration to the United States of Chinese and Indian nationals has almost exclusively been accomplished through the use of full-service smuggling organizations with networks throughout the United States designed to provide their clients the desired outcome. Included in the fee, either paid or taken from future earnings in the United States, is legal representation and advice designed to obtain release from custody with little immediate regard for cost, as well as the filing and pursuit of applications intended to extend their clients period of stay in the United States. Conversely, while many Latin American nationals also use smugglers to gain access to the United States, historically, the provided service more rarely includes access to a nationwide network of legal representatives employed by the transnational criminal organizations.

See [TRAC Report](#)

Uptick in Illegal Immigration from India

"..El Centro Sector Chief Gloria Chavez told Fox News that Indians generally fly to Qatar then Ecuador, then travel on foot or by bus through the jungles of Colombia and Panama, through Central America and Mexico to the border at El Centro in Imperial, California...many continue to believe they can game the system using their knowledge of how U.S. immigration law works..'Many use their lack of identification to claim to be one person in Mexico and another one in the United States,' she stated. 'In Mexico, they claim to be an adult because unaccompanied minors under 18 are arrested. In the U.S., the opposite is true. Here, they claim to be juveniles so they must be released.'

Excerpted from "India Abroad." To read the full August 17, 2018, article, click here - [India Abroad](#)

Other Immigration Fraud In the News

Los Angeles County District Attorney Lauds New Unit for Immigration Fraud Convictions

Federal Jury Finds Brandon Man Who Tried To Turn 12-Year-Old Relative Into His Child-Wife Guilty

Brooklyn Couple Arrested for Immigration Fraud Scheme

Jamaican National Sentenced for Passport Fraud Offenses

Farmington Hills fake university set up by ICE to nab foreign students

Feds Arrest Alleged H-1B Visa Schemer, IT Recruiter

NJ Businesses face immigration services fines

Owner of Gire Roofing Sentenced to Three Years in Prison for Visa Fraud; Harboring, Employing Illegal Aliens

Plea on Immigrant Assistance Services Fraud Case

Chicopee Police Officer Pleads Guilty to Immigration Fraud

Leader of Multi-Million Dollar Immigration Fraud Scheme Pleads Guilty

Additional Charges Filed in Case of Seven Aliens Who Conspired to Harbor Newman Police Officer's Alleged Killer



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Fraud Program Tips

- Fraud can exist wherever a benefit is possible.
- Fraud devalues the benefit and demeans the process.
- Our office's ability to combat immigration fraud largely depends on information we receive from EOIR employees.

Fraud Program Reboot

This newsletter marks the return of regular communications from your Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program. Our purpose is to inform, encourage, respond, and (perhaps) entertain as we accomplish the mission entrusted to the Program:

- Serve as a point of contact relating to concerns about possible fraud, and
- Coordinate with state, federal, local, and non-profit liaison partners with responsibility for or information about immigration fraud. (8 CFR 1003.0(f)(2))

News

On December 9, 2020, the Attorney General authorized disclosure of information contained in asylum and related records for the purpose of investigations carried out by the EOIR Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program and other DOJ personnel to (1) state and local criminal or civil prosecutorial authorities, and (2) state attorney licensing authorities. This waiver permits information sharing in criminal and administrative investigations which had previously been barred by concerns about the privacy of the applicant for asylum benefits, making it difficult to prosecute fraud in the asylum context. For more information, contact the Fraud Prevention Program.

First Principles

"Fraud consists of some deceitful practice or willful device, resorted to with intent to deprive another of his right, or in some manner to do him an injury. . . [Fraud] is always positive, [and] intentional."

-Black's Law Dictionary

Recent Prosecution Successes

On December 28, 2020, Laura Luz Maria Torres of Lake Worth, Florida, the lead defendant in a \$4 million scheme to defraud the U.S. immigration and tax systems, pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Kenneth Marra, in the Southern District of Florida. Torres pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit immigration and mail fraud, one count of conspiracy to steal and launder government money, and one count of false statements to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food assistance program.

On November 2, 2020, a Michigan woman was sentenced to 72 months in prison for defrauding immigrants seeking legal status by posing as a U.S. Department of Homeland Security attorney. Jessica Marie Rubio also was ordered to pay \$273,755 in restitution to 91 victims in Alabama, Michigan, South Carolina, and Texas.

On November 18, 2020, a law graduate who twice failed the bar exam and set up two fake law firms was sentenced to more than four years in federal prison for mail fraud and aggravated identity theft in connection with a fraudulent scheme wherein she posed and practiced law as a licensed attorney. The court also ordered her to pay \$14,318 in restitution to her victims.



Meet "Bogus," the Fraud Program's Mascot and K9 Fraud Fighter

Bogus is a fraud-finding wonder, even as a puppy, but her skills will improve as we continue to train her, train ourselves, and train one another about what "red flags" are and what to do about them.

When you see red flags, think: "BOGUS!"

Contact Us

Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program
Office of the General Counsel
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EOIR Fraud Program@usdoj.gov



2023-01424 00000028109



Fraud Program Axioms

- United States immigration status has tremendous monetary, social, and security implications.
- Judges sometimes are asked to make determinations in court based on information which is unverifiable and/or incomplete.
- The integrity of the immigration system relies on the vigilance and cooperation of all participants in the system.

Fraud Program Reboot: Reaction

• The February, 2021, edition of the revived "Lookout" was well received; we appreciate your observations and the constructive criticism received. Two recurring questions:

- 1. May I share this newsletter outside of the DOJ/EOIR family? Answer: Yes, please share with whomever might be interested in promoting the integrity and fairness of the Immigration Courts.
- 2. Is there a "mailing list" I could join if I do not have an EOIR email address? Answer: There is now! Email the word "subscribe" to rusty.fitzgerald@usdoj.gov

News

Last month, we announced that the Attorney General had conditionally waived some privacy restrictions in asylum and related cases for the purpose of sharing information with our state and local law enforcement partners and state Bar disciplinary authorities to further fraud investigations. The response from law enforcement agencies and state Bars has been overwhelmingly positive, and some investigations have already been supported by judicious disclosures of information as authorized. Since this waiver authority is fairly new, we appreciate the suggestions received and look forward to your future observations. We have already refined our processes, in response to your suggestions, to be more responsive to requests for information.

For assistance, contact the Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program.

First Principles:

Although there are many varieties of criminal fraud, all share common elements:

1. A scheme to take something of value to which the fraudster is not entitled,
2. An intentional and material false statement of one or more facts, and
3. In federal court, some basis for jurisdiction, like use of the mails.

Recent Prosecution Successes

Oklahoma: Ronald A. Rodriguez-Paz, 36, from Honduras, was sentenced January 27, 2021, to fourteen months in prison to be followed by removal proceedings following convictions for unlawful and fraudulent use of immigration documents. Rodriguez-Paz pleaded guilty keeping the immigration documents of a child from Honduras for about six months to ensure that child would stay with him, work for him, and pay him money he believed the child owed him. The defendant admitted that he sponsored the minor to come live with him in Tulsa, and that he knowingly possessed and used a counterfeit "lawful permanent resident" card with the identification number of another individual but with Paz's name and photograph.

New York: On February 18, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York announced the unsealing of two indictments charging nine individuals in two respective schemes to prepare and submit fraudulent asylum applications, affidavits and other documents to USCIS, and to coach asylum seekers to lie under oath during immigration proceedings. ILONA DZHANGAROVA and ARTHUR ARCADIAN, two immigration attorneys based in Brooklyn, New York, and their associate, IGOR REZNIK, were charged in one indictment with conspiracy to commit asylum fraud. Your Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program contributed to the predication and investigation of these schemes.



What are some examples of "Red Flags" to watch out for, Bogus?

- Attorneys asking leading questions to respondent or instructing respondent how to answer questions,
- Testimony that is inconsistent with documented information,
- Terms or phrases in statements or declarations by the respondent that the respondent would not customarily use in his or her native language when recounting a genuine experience.

When you see red flags, think: "BOGUS!"

Contact Us

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Office of the General Counsel
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EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov