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**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

## **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement**

### **News Releases**

**September 21, 2009**

### **Miami group sentenced for conspiracy to defraud illegal aliens in Florida and New York**

MIAMI - Three Miami residents who defrauded illegal aliens in Florida and New York out of \$426,700 by offering to assist them with immigration matters were sentenced Friday following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Inspector General (OIG).

The announcement was made by Jeffrey H. Sloman, acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Steven J. Mocsary, ICE special agent in charge OPR eastern region, and Donald Balberchak, DHS special agent in charge, OIG, Miami.

Nestor Romero, 56, Ada Calveiro, 60, and Rafael Diaz De La Rocha, 52, were sentenced on charges of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and making false statements in immigration papers, and wire fraud. Romero was also sentenced on a substantive charge of impersonating an officer and employee of the United States. Romero was sentenced to 110 months in prison; Calveiro was sentenced to 40 months in prison and Diaz De La Rocha was sentenced to 20 months in prison.

According to evidence presented at the trial of Calveiro, the defendants were part of a scheme to defraud illegal aliens by soliciting payments from them and falsely promising to assist them with immigration matters. More specifically, from approximately February 2003 through November 2004, defendant Calveiro and previously convicted co-defendants, Romero and Diaz De La Rocha completed and submitted fraudulent applications for work authorizations on behalf of illegal aliens, collecting as much as \$7,500 from each defrauded alien.

The scheme transpired in Florida and also in New York. However, the three defendants were residing in Miami-Dade County. As part of the scheme, Romero represented himself as an immigration attorney and/or an employee with DHS who could provide services to illegal aliens. Hundreds of victims were defrauded, but none of the submitted applications were approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

After receiving payments for his alleged services, defendant Romero prepared false immigration

**AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 09092260. (Posted 09/22/09)**

documents using personal information belonging to numerous identity theft victims, including alien registration numbers belonging to individuals who had not made such applications. In selling immigration services to illegal aliens, defendant Romero represented himself as an employee of DHS. Through this scheme, the defendants collected more than \$426,700 from aliens in connection with their immigration business. The five-year investigation was initiated after ICE and DHS received reports from multiple victims.

"People who earn substantial sums preying on the hopes of aliens face arrest and prosecution," said DHS Assistant Secretary for ICE John Morton. "ICE will protect the integrity of the immigration system and target those unscrupulous criminals who pose as agency officials and tarnish our image."

Acting U.S. Attorney Jeffrey H. Sloman stated, "Identity theft and immigration fraud were part and parcel of the defendants' scheme to enrich themselves at the expense of others. Two different sets of people were victimized - those whose identities were stolen, and those whose dreams of legal residence were shattered. The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to fighting fraud and abuse, whether it be fraud on our Medicare system, in our financial markets, or to our immigration system."

Sloman commended the investigative efforts of ICE, OPR and DHS, OIG. This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kelly S. Karase and Susan R. Osborne.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

Last Modified: Monday, September 21, 2009