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JANUARY 9, 2013 SALT LAKE CITY, UT

Fugitive Salt Lake City attorney accused in visa fraud case captured Defendant being returned to Utah to face charges

SALT LAKE CITY – A Salt Lake City immigration attorney who fled following his 2009 indictment on alien smuggling and visa fraud charges is headed to Utah after being captured while attempting to re-enter the U.S. on Christmas Day at the San Ysidro Port of Entry near San Diego.

James Hector Alcalá, 44, fled the U.S. in December 2010 and a federal arrest warrant was issued after he violated conditions of his pre-trial release. Alcalá made his initial appearance in federal court in San Diego Dec. 26, 2012. Alcalá waived his right to a preliminary hearing scheduled for Tuesday, which now paves the way for his transfer to Utah in the coming weeks to face charges.

The case investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations; the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; and the U.S. Department of Labor uncovered an alien smuggling ring, of which investigators believe Alcalá and his law firm participated.

Alcalá, the Alcalá Law Firm, Westside Property Management and seven other individuals are charged with conspiracy to commit alien smuggling and visa fraud; encouraging and inducing illegal aliens to come to, enter, or remain in the United States; and visa fraud. According to the federal indictment unsealed in July 2009, the defendants conspired to profit financially by assisting Utah employers in obtaining H-2B visas for their foreign national workers by fraudulently representing to the federal government that the foreign nationals were eligible for visas when, in fact, they were not.

Carlos Manuel Vorher, 46, of Tooele; Andres Lorenzo Acosta Parra, 34, of Salt Lake City; and Westside Property Management have since pleaded guilty to charges stemming from their involvement in the case. Sentencing hearings are pending.

Charges against two individuals named in the indictment, Daniel Trigo Villavicencio, 34, of Orem and Gustavo Ballesteros-Munoz, 49, of West Jordan, have been dismissed by federal prosecutors. A fugitive warrant remains in place for Carlos Enrique Gomez-Alvarez, 44, of Salt Lake City, who fled the country in 2009 after his arrest and initial appearance on the charges in New York.

The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Utah.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

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