



[New s Room \(http://w w w .ice.gov/new s/\)](http://www.ice.gov/news/) » [Recent Releases \(http://w w w .ice.gov/new s/releases/\)](http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/)

## News Releases



DECEMBER 10, 2012 SAN FRANCISCO, CA

### Former INS employee, 6 others indicted in marriage fraud scheme

SAN FRANCISCO – A past applications-adjudicator for the former U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has been indicted by a Bay Area grand jury on nine criminal counts stemming from his alleged role in a marriage fraud scheme.

Andrew Chojecki, 61, a naturalized U.S. citizen who most recently resided in Poland, is charged in an indictment handed down Dec. 6 with conspiracy to commit marriage and visa fraud, marriage fraud, and alien harboring. The charges are the result of a two-year probe by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and its partner agencies on the San Francisco Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's Fraud Detection and National Security Unit.

Six additional defendants are accused of conspiring with Chojecki to commit the fraud. They are; Beata Szkop, Malgorzata Zuk, Aaron Goldsmith, Pawel Karolak, Vito Scherma and Hector Vargas. The latter four defendants are also charged with alien harboring.

According to the indictment, unsealed Monday, Chojecki allegedly facilitated fraudulent marriages in exchange for cash payments from at least April 2010 through November of this year. The indictment claims Chojecki introduced aliens and U.S. citizens to each other for the purpose of entering into sham marriages to evade U.S. immigration laws. The indictment further alleges Chojecki provided the aliens with fraudulent immigration forms he prepared, sample questions he anticipated they might be asked by immigration officials, and guidance on steps aliens should take to make the marriages appear legitimate. In exchange for these services, Chojecki allegedly required the aliens to pay an initial lump sum at the time of the wedding, which he split with the U.S. citizen spouses, with additional sums payable to the spouses when the aliens received their green cards.

Chojecki was arrested in Los Angeles Nov. 23 when he arrived on a flight from Poland. The following week a magistrate judge in Los Angeles ordered Chojecki released on a \$170,000 unsecured bond, with the condition of electronic monitoring. Prosecutors have appealed that release order to the district court in San Francisco on the grounds that Chojecki is a flight risk. Defendants Szkop, Karolak, Vargas and Zuk were arrested Monday and made their initial appearance in federal court. Defendants Goldsmith and Scherma remain at large.

Each count of conspiracy to commit marriage and visa fraud, and marriage fraud carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. The maximum statutory penalty for each count of alien harboring is 10 years in prison. The government is also seeking forfeiture of assets arising out of the conspiracy and alien harboring counts.

You may also visit us on [Facebook \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwicegov), [Twitter \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwicegov) and [YouTube \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwicegov), or access this news release on your mobile device.

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

ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit [www.ICE.gov](http://www.ICE.gov). To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423 or complete our [tip form](#).