



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

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11 arrested, indicted in multi-state visa fraud operation

DES MOINES, Iowa - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested 11 individuals in six states Wednesday as part of an investigation into suspected visa and mail fraud. Matthew G. Whitaker, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa, announced the operation, which was carried out by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in Iowa, California, Massachusetts, Texas, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and New Jersey.

Vision Systems Group Inc., a New Jersey Domestic Profit Corporation with a branch office in Coon Rapids, Iowa, was also indicted in a 10-count federal indictment that included one count of conspiracy, eight counts of mail fraud, and one count of 'Notice of Forfeiture' in the amount of \$7.4 million.

"Today's multi-state enforcement action is the result of an extensive, ongoing investigation into suspected H-1B visa fraud, mail fraud, and conspiracy," said U.S. Attorney Whitaker. "Dubbed 'Operation Pacific Vision,' this investigation is the result of outstanding cooperation and collaboration among law enforcement agencies at all levels of government."

The investigation is being conducted by ICE in collaboration with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Fraud Detection and National Security Division (FDNS); U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General; U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS); U.S. Department of State; Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General, and is supported by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa.

"This case highlights the Department of Homeland Security's commitment to identifying and dismantling visa fraud schemes," said Homeland Security Acting Assistant Secretary for ICE John P. Torres. "Ensuring the integrity of our nation's legal immigration system is a top priority for ICE."

"This is a prime example of how the Department of Homeland Security identifies fraud," said Michael Aytes, USCIS's acting deputy director. "Our adjudication officers can spot inconsistencies during the application process that ultimately led to the successful outcome we're seeing today. Visa fraud undermines the integrity of the immigration system and I'm proud that our officers have helped to ensure

that American workers are not adversely impacted, while the DOL's Wage and Hour Division safeguards the treatment and compensation of H-1B workers. Congress sets a numerical cap for the admission of skilled workers into the U.S. The current H-1B cap is set at 65,000 visas per fiscal year. H-1B aliens can work in the United States for three years, with an option for an additional three years (for a maximum of six years).

Those arrested Wednesday by ICE agents include:

1. Shiva Neeli, arrested in Boston, Mass.; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.
2. Ramakrishna Maguluri, arrested in Atlanta, Ga.; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.
3. Villiappan Subbaiah, arrested in Dallas, Texas; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.
4. Suresh Pola, arrested in Pennsylvania; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.
5. Vishnu Reddy, arrested in Los Angeles, Calif.; charged with conspiracy, mail fraud and wire fraud.
6. Chockalingam Palaniappan, arrested in San Jose, Calif.; charged with conspiracy, mail fraud and wire fraud.
7. Vijay Myneni, arrested in San Jose, Calif.; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.
8. Venkata Guduru, arrested in New Jersey; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.
9. Praveen Andapally, arrested in New Jersey; charged with conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud, and making false statements in an immigration matter.
10. Amit Justa, arrested in New Jersey; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.
11. Karambir Yadav, arrested in Louisville, Ky.; charged with conspiracy and mail fraud.

The maximum sentence for conspiracy is five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum sentence for mail fraud is 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum sentence for wire fraud is 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum sentence for making a false statement in an immigration matter is 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The Department of Homeland Security has a multifaceted approach to detecting and investigating immigration and benefit fraud. ICE's Document and Benefit Fraud Task Forces were created in March 2006 to target and dismantle criminal organizations that threaten national security and public safety and close vulnerabilities in the immigration process. USCIS created the Fraud Detection and National Security Division (FDNS) to enhance the integrity of the immigration systems and to identify persons who pose a threat to national security or public safety. Cooperation between FDNS and ICE has helped to increase the incidence of enforcement actions. More information on these initiatives is available at <http://www.ice.gov/> and <http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.uscis.gov/>.

The following agencies investigated or assisted in this case: U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Iowa; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Citizenship

and Immigration Services' Fraud Detection and National Security Division; U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; U.S. Department of State; Kentucky Consular Center (a field office of the Bureau of Consular Affairs); U.S. Marshals Service; Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General; Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations; Des Moines Police Department; West Des Moines Police Department; Iowa Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Enforcement Office.

As with any criminal case, a charge is merely an accusation; a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. Because this investigation is in its early stages, it would be inappropriate to provide further details on the case at this time. As this is an open federal investigation, until further notice, the media is asked to direct any inquiries on Operation Pacific Vision to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Iowa's Public Information Officer, Mike Bladel at (515) 473-9342. No other agency is authorized to respond to questions on this matter.

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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.