

[Skip Navigation](#)



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

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

August 11, 2009

50 indicted as part of national marriage fraud scheme *Individuals entered into sham marriages to gain citizenship*

CINCINNATI - Agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) today began locating and arresting 50 people named in 27 federal indictments charging them with participating in a Cincinnati-based scheme to arrange sham marriages in order to evade U.S. immigration laws. Those indicted include 23 people who are in the United States illegally and 27 U.S. citizens they married.

33 individuals were subsequently taken into federal custody.

Gregory G. Lockhart, U. S. attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Brian Moskowitz, special agent in charge of ICE's Office of Investigations in Detroit, announced the arrests and indictments today.

A federal grand jury returned the indictments on August 5. The indictments were unsealed today. All 50 are charged with marriage fraud. Forty-nine are also charged with making false written statements and 39 are charged with making false representations. Each of the crimes is punishable by up to five years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000 and three years of supervised release. Those who are in the country illegally also face deportation.

"Marriage fraud poses a major vulnerability that must not go unchallenged," ICE Assistant Secretary John Morton said. "The significant number of indictments today as well the previous convictions that have been handed down as a result of Operation Honeymoon's Over should send the unambiguous message that ICE will not tolerate the exploitation of our country's immigration system. Whether you are marrying one person under false pretenses or various people, or facilitating the fraud, know this - you will be found, arrested and held accountable for your actions."

"The investigation has unraveled a scheme to arrange marriages between Eastern European aliens and U.S. citizens," Lockhart said. "The Eastern Europeans paid a fee to the U.S. citizens and the leaders of the conspiracy to arrange the marriage. They created false documents indicating that the marriages were legal and presented the false documents to immigration officials."

These arrests are part of an ongoing investigation dubbed Operation Honeymoon's Over. Ten of the individuals were indicted in May 2009 on charges of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud. Of those, eight Cincinnati-area residents have already pleaded guilty to arranging multiple sham marriages in order to help resident aliens obtain permanent legal residence status. They are awaiting sentencing.

The two others indicted in May remain at large. To date, this investigation has led to 13 convictions.

Conspiracy to commit marriage fraud is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000 and three years of supervised release.

Last year, ICE made 238 criminal arrests related to marriage fraud schemes and was successful in handing out convictions for 198 of those individuals. ICE also seized nearly \$430,000 in assets related to these cases.

-- 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: Wednesday, August 12, 2009