



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

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Germantown man who impersonated a federal immigration agent pleads guilty to fraud scheme

GREENBELT, Md. - Robert Fred Mejia, 29, of Germantown, Md., pleaded guilty to conspiring to transport money obtained by fraud across state lines, impersonating an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer, transporting money obtained by fraud in connection with a scheme to purportedly provide immigration services and being a felon in possession of ammunition after an investigation led by ICE.

The guilty plea was announced by U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Special Agent in Charge of ICE's Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) William Winter; Special Agent in Charge Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General Peter P. Paradis, Sr.; Montgomery County Police Chief J. Thomas Manger; and Montgomery County State's Attorney John McCarthy.

According to the plea agreement, from December 2007 to June 2009, Mejia and a conspirator charged over 50 individuals for immigration services which they did not provide. On numerous occasions, Mejia and his co-conspirator caused such individuals in Washington D.C., and Virginia to bring \$5,000 or more to their office in Gaithersburg, Md., to pay for the purported immigration services. Mejia and the co-conspirator completed immigration documents and had fingerprints taken for the individuals. However, no paperwork was ever filed on behalf of those clients.

As part of the fraud scheme, during meetings with the individuals seeking immigration assistance, Mejia dressed as an ICE employee, wearing: a shirt bearing the letters "ICE;" what appeared to be a gun in a holster and pepper spray; a bullet proof vest; and a hat bearing the letters "ICE." Mejia also displayed what appeared to be an ICE identification badge and drove a vehicle that resembled a police vehicle. At no time was Mejia employed by ICE or any other agency of the United States.

As a result of the fraud, between 50 and 250 victims from the District of Columbia and Virginia lost between \$400,000 and \$1 million.

In addition, Mejia admitted that he illegally possessed 50 rounds of 9 mm ammunition and 49 rounds of .44-40 ammunition, which were seized by law enforcement during a search of his home on June 26, 2009. Mejia was prohibited from possessing the ammunition due to a previous 2nd degree assault conviction in Montgomery County.

Mejia faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy; and 10 years in prison for interstate transportation of money obtained by fraud and for being a felon in possession of ammunition. Chief U.S. District Judge Deborah K. Chasanow has scheduled sentencing for January 20, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. Mejia remains detained.

Mejia was previously convicted of related state charges and is scheduled to be sentenced on those charges in November.