



U.S. Department of Justice  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

LOS/INV 100/4.3

300 North Los Angeles Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

June 25, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR: CYNTHIA A COUTTS  
SENIOR SPECIAL AGENT  
HQ-NSU

FROM: Dan Buschelman  
Special Agent

SUBJECT: Proposal for Operation "LAX Lounge"

#### Overview

The Social Security Administration (OIG) conducted an investigation involving an employee of the Social Security Administration and two individuals who were involved in obtaining valid Social Security Numbers through fraudulent means. Rosa M. IOANE, a former employee, during the period beginning January 1, 1998, and ending June 28, 2000, processed SS-5 applications. As a result of an analysis done by INS status verification, it was determined that approximately 1,000 SS-5 applications should never have been processed due to the use of fraudulent information as proof of lawful alien status/employment authorization. Rosa M. IOANE-Camacho, Firas RTEIMEH, and Ali AL NASHAWATI were convicted for their involvement in the scheme. Firas RTEIMEH, a national of Jordan, was an employee of a security company at LAX. This security company is responsible for escorting TWOVs through the airport to their out going flight. The third individual, Ali AL NASHAWATI, the husband of Rosa IOANE-Camacho, was smuggled through LAX after entering the U.S. as a TWOV.

FBI and INS conducted separate investigations after 9/11 to determine if alien smuggling was currently on going through LAX via individuals currently working at the security company Aviation Safeguard. INS, based on surveillance and records, determined that no smuggling activity occurred after 9/11. This is partly due to the fact that after 9/11, FBI interviewed several employees at the airport and interviewed all the individuals convicted of the social security number scheme about smuggling at the airport. Several associates of these individuals were still employed at the security company. FBI conducted several UC operations, using one of the individuals convicted of the Social Security scheme, to meet with associates from the airport. Information from the FBI indicates that these

associates indicated that there hasn't been any smuggling after 9/11 due to the increased awareness by law enforcement of smuggling activity at the airport.

#### Proposed Actions

INS, with the concurrence of the U.S. Attorney's Office, determined that it would be appropriate to conduct a historical smuggling investigation regarding the past smuggling activity. Based on information received to date, this investigation will focus on Firas RETEIMEH and Basem RETEIMEH, who were employees of Aviation Safeguards. Also other individuals who are suspected of being involved are Ali AL NASHAWATI, Mohamad ZYOUT and Rosa IOANE will also be investigated. Along with the smuggling investigation, it has been determined that the aliens which have received social security numbers will be investigated. If appropriate, these aliens will be placed into removal proceedings and any applicable criminal violations will be pursued. Social Security Administration will investigate any appropriate violations as well.

During the take down of the Social Security investigation, a search of Firas's residence was conducted. During the search, an INS stamp was located. This stamp was being used at LAX and it was determined that it was compromised on 03/19/97. The stamp was seized by the Social Security Administration, then turned over to the FBI, at the request of the U.S. Attorney's Office. On 06/20/02, the stamp was then turned over to the Service. The Duty Officer for FDL was then contacted. Information from FDL indicates that there is currently no case file opened on the stamp and that there has been no referral to FDL regarding stamp 4173 or anything that the stamp had been used on. FDL indicated that the stamp should be returned to LAX so that the stamp can be destroyed. Pual Williams Assistant Port Director at LAX has been contacted to provide any reports that have been completed regarding the missing stamp. Appropriate violations will be investigated.

Also during the search, approximately \$100,000.00 (USD) was located. This money was inventoried by SSA and was turned over to U.S. Customs. It was claimed by Firas RETEIMEH, that that money was brought into the U.S. by a sister, and that the money was never reported at the time of entry. Appropriate seizure of these or any other proceeds will be investigated.

Currently, an I-130 benefits fraud investigation regarding the marriage between Ali AL NASHAWATI and Rosa IOANE is on going. Information provided to the service indicates that this is a marriage of convenience and that the sole purpose of this marriage is to obtain Immigration benefits for Ali AL NASHAWATI.

Proposed Actions relating to arrest and interview of aliens/witnesses relating to 8 USC 1324 violations:

- (A) Locate, arrest and interview aliens who have fraudulently obtained social security numbers:
  - (1) Locate and arrest of aliens: (INS violations or appropriate criminal violations)
    - (a) If it is determined that these aliens have been smuggled into the U.S., it will be necessary to do a complete interview regarding the smuggling activity and record this information on the I-213.
    - (b) It will be necessary to complete the USAO questioner regarding the smuggling activity and Social Security violations.(See Attached Q&A)
    - (c) Present any appropriate criminal violations to the USAO (i.e. Social Security or INS violations). USAO in the Central District of California indicated that they will entertain any possible criminal prosecution for any individual who has any terrorist ties, who have been smuggled into the U.S., or has any previous felony conviction.
  - (2) Determine the viability of using these aliens as material witnesses for prosecution of the smuggling activity.

(B) Develop a list of possible criminal violations for 8 USC 1325 (Alien Smuggling) regarding individuals who may have smuggled aliens into the U.S. while employed as a security guard at POEs.

- (1) Identify individuals suspected of smuggling aliens.
    - (a) Obtain information through evidence and witness testimony regarding suspected principals.
  - (2) Identify target locations and secure evidence supporting alien smuggling.
- (C) Present evidence to U.S. Attorney's for possible criminal search warrants and criminal filings.

HQ INS has conducted a thorough records check regarding the individuals who have received Social Security numbers fraudulently. Employment checks regarding the Social Security numbers has also been conducted by the Social Security Administration. After analysis of these checks it has been determined that several of these aliens have been located throughout the U.S. involving several District offices. It is requested that coordination of these districts be conducted through HQ. Attached is a breakdown of which Districts are affected. Photo spreads on all suspected individuals involved in the scheme will be sent to the Districts before the operation. During the operation FBI/JTTF personnel may request to interview these aliens. A determination as to whether these FBI/JTTF interviews will be conducted, will be made by FBI, Long Beach, California or FBI-HQ. For arrests made in other Districts, other than LOS, FBI/JTTF will request interviews as needed.

Suspected Principals and target locations:

- (A) RTEIMEH, Firras (See Attached information on Subject)
  - (B) RTEIMEH, Basem (See attached information on Subject)
  - (C) AL NASHAWATTI, Ali (See attached information on Subject)
  - (D) ZYOUT, Mohamed (See attached information on Subject)
  - (E) ELATI, Karim Be Sadok (See attached information on Subject)
  - (F) IOANE-Camacho, Rosa Maria (See attached information on Subject)
  - (G) AL NASHAWATI, Abdallah (See attached information on Subject)
- (H) Target location: Rivera Travel – 5220 Clark Ave. #110 Lakewood, CA 90712. Information received indicates that suspects used this travel agency to purchase travel arrangements for individuals smuggled. Chief Executive officer is Alaa SHAHWAN.

Once it has been established that the arrested alien can possibly be used as a witness, it is requested that that INS in Los Angeles please be notified. Updated questions regarding the smuggling activity maybe required. Before an alien can be utilized as a material witness, it may be necessary for Los Angeles INS to re-interview the alien.

## Recent Investigative Events

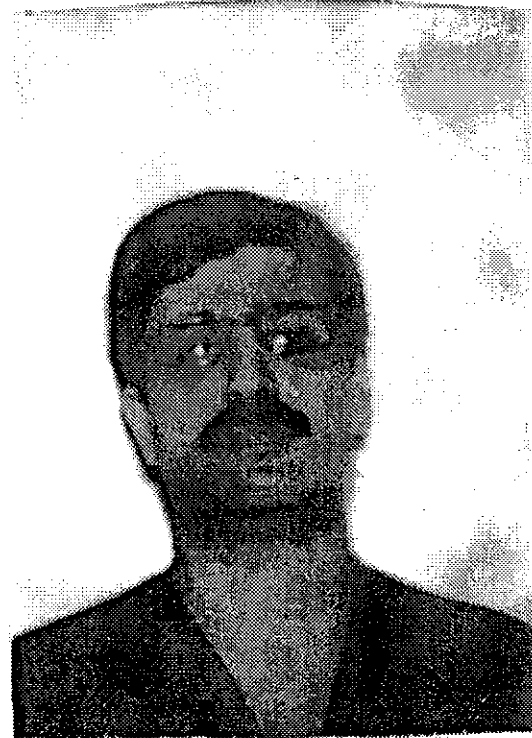
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On 6/22 and on 6/24, Mohamed ZYOUT was interviewed. ZYOUT is currently cooperating with the investigation. ZYOUT indicated that Basem and Firas RETEIMEH began working at Aviation Safeguards in 1996. Indication is that Basem smuggled individuals less than Firas. Arrangements were made in Jordan for these aliens to enter the U.S., through contacts in the U.S.. The average fee was \$6,000.00 (USD) plus the price of the tickets. Usually the tickets were purchased at Rivera Travel in the U.S. and then the ticket was sent back to Jordan. The final destination on the tickets was Colombia, because no visa was required. The usual trip was Jordan to Europe, to the U.S., and then to Colombia. When the alien arrived in the U.S., they met Firas or Basem, where they were escorted out of the airport. The airline ticket was then given to Firas or Basem, which was turned back in for cash. The smuggling fee and the cash from the ticket was deposited in the U.S. and then transferred to a City Corp bank account in Jordan. ZYOUT then supplied some names of aliens which Firas RETEIMEH and Ali AL NASHAWATI smuggled into the U.S.. ZYOUT also provided information that Basem RETEIMEH smuggled his ex-wife. ZYOUT indicated that Firas RETEIMEH was also smuggled Korean nationals. ZYOUT claimed that he smuggled approximately 200 to 300 Korean nationals. ZYOUT provided Firas's contact when he smuggled Korean nationals. ZYOUT also provided names of aliens which Firas RETEIMEH and he smuggled into the U.S.. ZYOUT is currently providing further information and is expected to provide names, addresses and phone numbers of other smuggled aliens.

Attachment: (A)

Name: RETIEMEHI, Firas  
DOB: 05/25/1969  
POB: Amman, Jordan  
Immigration Status: A70 046 206 Subject is currently under Deportation Proceedings, currently release on \$75,00.00 Immigration bond.  
Convictions: Subject convicted for his involvement in the Social Security Scheme.  
Employment: Ex employee of Aviation Safeguards at LAX.

# DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

05/25/2001



Attachment:

(B)

Name:

Basem RTEIMEH

DOB:

11/17/57

Immigration Status:

A70 059 817 Subject is currently under Deportation proceedings.  
Currently has a valid EAD.

Convictions:

None.

Employment:

Currently employed at Aviation Safeguards.



Attachment: (C)

Name: AL NASHAWATI, Ali

DOB: 09/21/70

POB: Zarka, Jordan

Immigration Status: A77 305 179 Subject is currently under Deportation proceedings, released on \$5,00.00 bond. Currently has a valid EAD.

Convictions: Subject convicted for his involvement in the Social Security scheme.

Employment: none.



Attachment: (D)

Name: ZYOUT, Mohamad GHAZI falah

DOB: 01/20/63

POB: Amman, Jordan

Immigration Status: A29 284 174 Subject is LAPR., currently applying for Naturalization.

Convictions: Subject spent 9 months in prison in France, possibly wanted in France. Currently determining there is an outstanding warrant in France for the Subject.

Employment: None.



Attachment:

(E)

Name:

ELATI, Karim Ben Sadok

DOB:

10/29/72

POB:

France-Tunisian citizenship

Immigration Status:

A76 611 679 Subject currently has an I-130 petition pending with the Service. Spouse has withdrawn the petition and a denial is currently being issued.

Convictions:

none.

Employment:

Subject is currently employed at Aviation Safeguards.



State	Count
AZ	3
CA	151
CT	1
FL	11
GA	20
IL	32
KS	3
KY	1
LA	1
MA	11
MI	5
MN	7
NJ	92
NY	40
OH	4
OK	7
PA	2
RI	1
TN	3
TX	22
UN	507
WI	3

Contact Numbers:

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