



Mexican national found guilty of multiple federal sex trafficking and immigration crimes

Amador Cortes-Meza, of Tlaxcala, Mexico, was found guilty on 19 charges related to sex trafficking and human smuggling.

Between the spring of 2006 and June 2008, Cortes-Meza and others charged in the conspiracy recruited and enticed approximately 10 girls and young women, some as young as 14 years old, to enter the U.S. illegally from Mexico. Cortes-Meza lured the victims to the Atlanta area by promising better lives, legitimate employment or romantic relationships with him. Instead, once they arrived, he forced them to engage in prostitution; brutally beat them; isolated them from their families; and threatened to harm them and their loved ones.

On a nightly basis, the victims were driven to apartments and homes in Duluth, Chamblee, Canton, Marietta and Forrest Park, Ga., and as far away as North Carolina and Alabama to provide commercial sex to as many as 40 customers a night.

Cortes-Meza's brother and two nephews were previously convicted after pleading guilty to sex trafficking charges related to the scheme.

(November 2010)

Operation Predator/Child Exploitation

Each year, millions of children fall prey to sexual predators. These young victims are left with permanent psychological, physical and emotional scars. Seeking to end this criminal activity and to protect children worldwide from exploitation, ICE developed Operation Predator, an initiative to identify, investigate and arrest child predators and sexual offenders. Operation Predator draws on ICE's unique investigative and enforcement authorities to safeguard children.

Under Operation Predator, ICE targets and investigates child pornographers, child sex tourists and facilitators, human smugglers and traffickers of minors, criminal aliens convicted of offenses against minors, and those deported for child exploitation offenses who have returned to the U.S. illegally.

Operation Predator brings together an array of ICE disciplines and resources to target these child sex abusers. As part of the effort:

- ICE created the National Child Victim Identification System in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service, the Department of Justice and other agencies.
- ICE agents stationed internationally work with foreign governments, Interpol and others to enhance coordination and cooperation on crimes that cross borders. ICE is a member of the Virtual Global Taskforce, joining law enforcement agencies around the world to fight child exploitation information and images that travel via the Internet.
- ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around-the-clock by investigators.



Narcotics Enforcement

ICE investigates narcotics smuggling organizations and the methods they use to smuggle contraband across U.S. borders. Smuggling methods include the use of high-speed vessels, cargo containers, aircraft, commercial trucking, commercial vessels and human couriers.

ICE special agents have extensive knowledge of the border environment and techniques employed by smuggling organizations to transport contraband into the U.S. This expertise has been gained through years of experience in

undercover operations, utilizing confidential informants, special enforcement operations and contraband smuggling investigations.

Although the methods used by smuggling organizations are always changing; through continued training and use of emerging technologies and dedication, ICE has maintained its expertise in disrupting and dismantling these criminal organizations.

As a leader in narcotics investigations and enforcement, ICE also participates in key task forces around the country. ICE brings its investigative expertise in money laundering and bulk cash smuggling to the fight against drug trafficking. Knowing how criminals acquire, move and store cash helps to arm law enforcement with critical skills needed to halt drug traffickers in their tracks.

In addition, ICE participates in the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force initiative, which brings law enforcement agency partners together in designated areas with a high concentration of narcotics distribution, transportation, smuggling and other drug-related activities. HIDTA task forces are administered by the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, which launched the program in 1990.

ICE also participates in the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program, which was established in 1982 to conduct comprehensive, multi-level attacks on major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations.



Canadian John Wrenshall sentenced on child porn charges

John Wrenshall, 64, was sentenced to 300 months in prison for inviting men to travel from around the world to his home in Thailand in order to sexually abuse young boys. Wrenshall's customers were allowed to videotape and photograph the abuse. Wrenshall was indicted by a federal grand jury in New Jersey after authorities learned that Wayne Nelson Corliss, formerly of Union City, N.J., traveled to Wrenshall's house to engage in illegal sexual acts with minor boys.

Interpol released a sanitized photograph of Corliss sexually abusing young Thai boys to media outlets in the U.S. and abroad, making a global appeal for any information that could identify him. Within 48 hours of the photo's release and acting on information obtained from individuals who recognized the offender, London's Metropolitan Police and HSI special agents arrested Corliss at London's Heathrow Airport.

The release of Corliss' photo represented only the second time Interpol has made such a public appeal to identify a suspected child predator. Interpol and ICE are partners in the Virtual Global Taskforce, an international alliance of law enforcement agencies committed to joint, international enforcement efforts designed to keep children safe from sexual predators around the world.

Corliss pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 20 years in prison on sex tourism and related charges.

(January 2011)

Cornerstone

ICE pursues financial investigations as a way to beat criminals at their own trade. By following the money trail, law enforcement can identify and dismantle international criminal networks, seizing their proceeds and related assets. Cornerstone is one of ICE's top financial investigations initiatives, responsible for detecting and eliminating weaknesses within U.S. financial, trade and transportation sectors that can be exploited by criminal networks. The Cornerstone methodology is founded upon a partnership between law enforcement and the private sector: law enforcement entities share criminal typologies and methods with businesses and industries that manage the financial, trade and transportation systems that terrorists and criminal

organizations seek to exploit. This sharing of information allows the financial, trade and transportation communities to take precautions against exploitation. In return, ICE receives information and insight from the private sector to more thoroughly investigate these complex and sophisticated criminal schemes.



Operation Firewall/Bulk Cash Smuggling

In 2005, ICE partnered with CBP to launch Operation Firewall, a comprehensive law enforcement operation targeting criminal organizations involved in the smuggling of large quantities of U.S. currency (bulk cash smuggling) at U.S. ports of entry. Within the U.S., ICE works with state and local partners to identify and intercept smuggled bulk cash shipments being transported along domestic interstate highways.

Bulk Cash Smuggling Center

ICE's Bulk Cash Smuggling Center (BCSC) is a centralized source for information and support used for identifying, investigating and disrupting bulk cash smuggling activities around the world. The BCSC is located in Williston, Vt.

More stringent federal laws against money laundering, along with anti-money laundering measures adopted by traditional financial institutions, have forced criminal organizations to shift the movement of their illicit proceeds

outside of the established financial industry. To avoid the scrutiny of law enforcement, these criminal organizations are increasingly employing non-traditional methods to move funds, including the smuggling of bulk cash into, out of and through the U.S.

The BCSC provides one-stop shopping — 24 hours a day — to assist federal, state, local and foreign law enforcement authorities in their efforts to restrict the flow of cash that supports criminal enterprise. The BCSC also provides real-time tactical intelligence, investigative support and expertise in the transportation and smuggling of bulk cash. By contacting the BCSC, law enforcement officers gain access to financial investigative expertise that will help them to more effectively follow the money trail.

Mass-Marketing Fraud

One of ICE's leading priorities in its law enforcement mission is combating financial crime, which includes mass-marketing fraud. Mass-marketing fraud has become more widespread in recent years, thanks in part to the spread of low-cost communication technology that makes it easier to defraud victims on a global scale. For example, telemarketing or identity theft scams are frequently coordinated from overseas locations.

As part of its commitment to combat mass-marketing fraud, ICE is a participant in the multi-agency International Mass-Marketing Fraud Working Group (IMMFWG), which was established in 2007.

The IMMFWG brings together law enforcement, regulatory and consumer protection agencies from seven countries to:

- Exchange information and intelligence on mass-marketing fraud;
- Coordinate transnational operations to detect and disrupt mass-marketing fraud operations and apprehend their perpetrators; and
- Drive public awareness and public education measures concerning international mass-marketing fraud schemes.





Trade Transparency Unit

Criminal and terrorist organizations frequently exploit global trade systems to move funds around the world through complex and sometimes confusing documentation associated with legitimate trade transactions. Trade-based money laundering is an alternative remittance system that allows illegal organizations the opportunity to earn, move and store proceeds disguised as legitimate trade. Funds are moved by false-invoicing, over-invoicing and under-invoicing commodities that are imported or exported around the world. It is estimated that trade-based money laundering involves billions of dollars annually and is growing each year.

ICE established the Trade Transparency Unit (TTU) initiative to conduct analysis of trade data provided through partnerships with other countries' trade transparency units. One of the most effective ways to identify instances and patterns of trade-based money laundering is through the exchange and subsequent analysis of trade data for anomalies that would only be apparent by examining both sides of a transaction.

Using state-of-the-art software and proven investigative techniques, a TTU can identify previously invisible trade-based alternative remittance systems and customs fraud.

\$58,300 returned to victim of telemarketing fraud

HSI special agents returned \$58,300 to an elderly victim of telemarketing con artists operating from Canada. The money was returned to an 85-year-old Decatur, Ill. resident, following a multi-agency investigation under a joint U.S.-Canada initiative called "Project COLT."

Although there can be many variations to the scam, in this case the callers told the elderly man that he had won a lottery prize but had to pay fees and service charges to be able to collect the fictitious winnings.

Project COLT was formed in 1998 to identify, disrupt and dismantle telemarketing fraud operations in the U.S. and Canada.

Project COLT members have formed partnerships with the Canada Border Services Agency, Canada Post Corporation, Federal Express, Purolator, UPS, DHL and other companies to assist with intercepting and returning funds to victims.

(February 2011)

Foreign Corruption Investigations

Large-scale corruption by public officials in other nations, particularly in developing nations, poses a significant threat to public trust and government infrastructure. In many cases, public corruption exists in unstable environments in which criminal and terrorist organizations flourish.

ICE spearheads investigations of corrupt foreign officials who plunder state coffers for personal gain and then attempt to place those funds in the U.S. financial system. The ICE Foreign Corruption Investigations Group in Miami targets these assets. Miami is the group's location due to the number of assistance requests received from Central and South American, and Caribbean governments.

Nine Internet commerce domains seized from movie pirates

In its first enforcement action, "Operation In Our Sites," an ICE initiative aimed at Internet counterfeiting and piracy, ICE seized and ceased the operation of nine domains.

The websites were offering pirated first-run movies, often within hours of their theatrical release. HSI special agents also seized assets from 15 banking, PayPal, investment and advertising accounts, and executed four residential search warrants in several states.

ICE's IPR Center is directing the government's response to a crime that is estimated to cost American industry billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs every year. Operation In Our Sites is targeting not only films and music, but other items distributed over the Internet, such as counterfeit pharmaceuticals, software, electronics, games and products that threaten public health and safety.

The investigation resulted in the seizure of the following domain names: tvshack.net, movies-links.tv, filesump.com, now-movies.com, planetmoviez.com, thepiratecity.org, zml.com, ninjavidio.net and ninjathis.net. These sites allowed visitors to stream or download popular television shows and movies.

(June 2010)

Customs Cross-Designation

To strengthen the agency's law enforcement mission, ICE works collaboratively with federal, state and local partners in a force-multiplier approach to investigations. ICE is authorized under federal law to cross-designate other law enforcement officers to investigate and enforce customs laws.

Customs cross-designation authority can also be extended to foreign law enforcement partners for cases that cross international boundaries. This authority enhances ICE's ability to work more closely with these counterparts, fostering secure relationships and cooperation between the U.S. and other countries.

Intellectual Property Rights

Our global economy and e-commerce have made combating intellectual property theft a more complex challenge. Modern technology has reduced the costs associated with producing and distributing counterfeit and pirated software, pharmaceuticals, electronics, household appliances and other products. The National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center), led by ICE, is the U.S. government's clearinghouse for investigations into counterfeiting and piracy, as well as crimes that threaten public health, public safety and fair competition.

The IPR Center was created to promote the sharing of information, resources and personnel among U.S. government agencies responsible for combating counterfeiting, piracy and related IPR crime.

Located in a state-of-the-art facility in Arlington, Va., ICE's partners in the IPR Center include:

- Defense Criminal Investigative Service;
- Federal Bureau of Investigation;
- Food and Drug Administration, Office of Criminal Investigations;
- Government of Mexico;
- Naval Criminal Investigative Service;
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection;
- U.S. General Services Administration Office of the Inspector General;
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; and
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service.