

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Paul J. Fishman, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

News on the Internet: News Releases and related documents are posted at our website.
Go to: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

Contact:

Michael Drewniak, Public Affairs Officer
973-645-2888

blak1217.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 17, 2009

Indictment Charges Kearny Woman With Defrauding Dozens of Immigrants by Posing as a Federal Official

(More)

Public Affairs Office
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

NEWARK – A Kearny woman was arrested at her home this morning on an Indictment accusing her of orchestrating a scheme to defraud dozens of immigrants out of hundreds of thousands of dollars by falsely posing as a federal official with the power to make real her victims’ dreams of becoming United States citizens, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

A federal grand jury returned the Indictment yesterday against Rosa Blake, a/k/a “Mafalda,” a/k/a “Rosa Vareiro,” 54, of Kearny, for devising and executing the scheme to defraud immigrants by falsely holding herself out as a powerful federal official invested with the authority to provide immigration documents to her victims.

Blake, who employs herself as a housekeeper, was arrested early today at her home by Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Special Agents of IRS Criminal Investigation. Blake appeared before a U.S. Magistrate Judge Madeline Cox Arleo for an initial appearance, where she was ordered detained.

Blake will have to appear in federal court in Newark again on a date to be determined for arraignment on the Indictment.

Those who believe they were victimized by the defendant or have information to provide can call ICE Special Agent Darren Eng, at 201-653-1996, ext. 230. Callers can remain anonymous.

“This defendant appears to have engaged in a cruel hoax against dozens of victims by raising their hopes of attaining legal immigration status while picking their pockets,” said Fishman. “Immigration is a legal, civil process. We encourage anyone in the immigrant community who confronts predatory or fraudulent practices like these to report them to authorities.”

Blake allegedly began the scheme at least as early as May 2004 and continued it at least until April 2009. She allegedly targeted victims who required official government action to obtain more permanent legal status in the United States than they possessed. According to the Indictment, Blake falsely represented to her victims that she worked for federal immigration authorities. For a fee of thousands of dollars per victim – of which there were dozens, according to the Indictment – Blake allegedly promised to provide approval or speed up approval time of the victims’ immigration paperwork, including permanent residency documents (commonly known as “green cards”) and employment authorization documents.

Blake allegedly represented to her victims that the “services” she was purportedly providing were legal, and that Blake’s status as a government official provided her with special access to applications for employment authorization documents and green cards. Therefore, Blake claimed, she could influence the processes by which these applications were approved.

Blake would often instruct her victims to meet Blake at her home, where Blake would take the victim’s identification papers and receive money for her “services,” according to the Indictment. Occasionally, Blake would meet her victims wearing what appeared to be official government

credentials around her neck. She would sometimes show her victims official-looking papers, with what appeared to be letterhead and insignias of federal immigration authorities, and would make the victims sign the papers, according to the Indictment. But Blake would never permit her victims to retain or to make copies of these papers. Blake would then allegedly falsely represent to her victims that in a matter of several months, they would receive employment authorization documents in the mail, followed thereafter by green cards.

Instead of taking any action to further her victims' status in the United States, the Indictment charges, Blake merely kept their money for her own personal use.

Oftentimes, according to the Indictment, when victims had not received any documents from Blake, they would attempt to contact her to check on the status of their applications. In many situations, Blake would allegedly threaten her victims, telling them, among other things, that Blake's purported position as a United States government official gave her the power to have the victims deported at any time, even in the middle of the night; that Blake was a dangerous person; that because Blake knew her victims' personal information, she therefore knew where they lived and who their relatives were; that the victims would never see their children again once the victims were deported; and that because the victims were illegal immigrants, they could not stop Blake from having the victims deported, nor could they report Blake to any other government authority.

The 14-count Indictment charges Blake with six counts of wire fraud and eight counts of false personation of a government official. Each count of wire fraud carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, while each count of false personation carries a statutory maximum of three years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Despite indictment, all defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge East Steven Mocsary; Office of Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Newark Peter Edge; and Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Newark William P. Offord, with the investigation leading to today's Indictment.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Zach Intrater.

-end-

Defense Counsel: K. Anthony Thomas, Esq., Federal Public Defender's Office, Newark