



# UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Three Arrested on Conspiracy and Marriage Fraud Charges**

(Norfolk, Virginia) – Andrei Baletski, and Elena V. Ryabikina, both age 22 and of Virginia Beach, Virginia, were arrested Saturday on a three count indictment charging Baletski with conspiracy and Ryabikina with conspiracy, marriage fraud, and false statements related to naturalization or citizenship. A third man, Nathan W. Wicker, age 23 was also arrested in Panama City, Florida, on the same indictment. Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, made the announcement after the trio were arrested on a federal arrest warrant issued pursuant to the indictment.

According to court documents, Baletski, a Belarus national, arranged for his girlfriend, Ryabikina, a Russian national, to marry Wicker, a United States citizen, who was serving in the United States Navy at the time. In exchange for getting married, Baletski allegedly agreed to pay Wicker \$6,000 in installments as Wicker and Ryabikina completed the necessary steps for her to become a lawful permanent resident. The indictment further alleges that Wicker and Ryabikina were married in Virginia Beach in September 2005 for the purpose of evading the immigration laws, that they filed paperwork to adjust Ryabikina's status in March 2006, and that they made false statements to a United States Citizenship and Immigration Service adjudications officer concerning the marriage in February 2007. The indictment also alleges that Baletski agreed to pay a female undercover law enforcement agent \$6,000 to marry him so that he could apply for lawful permanent resident status as well. The investigation remains ongoing.

The case was investigated by Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Special Assistant United States Attorney Joseph L. Kosky is prosecuting the case for the United States.

An indictment alleges criminal conduct, but is not evidence, and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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