



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Southern District of New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, November 30, 2011
<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys>

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES TWENTY INDIVIDUALS
FOR PARTICIPATING IN A SCHEME TO RECRUIT ILLEGAL
IMMIGRANTS TO WORK IN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT CLUBS
CONTROLLED BY LA COSA NOSTRA**

*Defendants Charged with Racketeering, Extortion, Visa Fraud, Immigration and Marriage
Fraud Crimes*

*Seven Defendants Are Alleged Members or Associates of the Gambino and Bonanno
Crime Families*

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, James T. Hayes, Jr., the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's ("ICE") Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), and Robert Goodrich, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service ("DSS"), announced charges today against 20 individuals for their participation in a scheme that involved recruiting women from Russia and other Eastern European countries to illegally enter the U.S. to work as exotic dancers at adult entertainment clubs ("Strip Clubs") controlled by the Gambino and Bonanno Organized Crime Families of La Cosa Nostra. Several of the defendants also arranged for many of the women to enter into sham marriages with U.S. citizens. Defendants ALPHONSE TRUCCHIO, WILLIAM PAZIENZA, SR., CHRISTOPHER COLON, and RICHARD GUTKOWSKI, who are members or associates of the Gambino Organized Crime Family, and ANTHONY FRASCONE, PAUL CASELLA, and LAWRENCE ZAINO, who are members or associates of the Bonanno Organized Crime Family, are charged with racketeering and extortion crimes related to their control of several Strip Clubs located in Queens and Long Island, New York, at which the women worked. These seven defendants and 13 others – ALEKSANDR KRAVETS, THOMAS DEVITT III, GERALD MONFORT, YONG WANG, BORIS YUSUPOV, VITALIY MINDYUK, ZHANNA KUZNETSOVA, ELENA TURUBANOVA, NATALIA IVANOVA, CHRISTINE GUNNING, JEFFREY RINCHEY, OSCAR ZELEDON, and ALEXANDER BELESON – are also charged with several other crimes related to the scheme, including visa fraud, marriage fraud, and

transporting, harboring, and inducing the entry of illegal aliens. All of the defendants were arrested today and will be presented before U.S. Magistrate Judge Gabriel W. Gorenstein in Manhattan federal court this afternoon. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge Victor Marrero.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara stated: “As alleged, the schemes in which these defendants participated ran the gamut of criminal activity – from racketeering and extortion, to immigration and marriage fraud. And the defendants themselves had one thing in common – the desire to turn the women they allegedly helped enter this country illegally into their personal profit centers. Today’s arrests have brought an end to their illicit activities.”

ICE HSI Special Agent-in-Charge James T. Hayes, Jr., stated: “Today’s arrests bring to an end a long-standing criminal enterprise operated by colluding organized crime entities that profited wildly through a combination of extortion and fraud. As alleged, the defendants controlled their business and protected their turf through intimidation and threats of physical and economic harm. Today, that business model has been extinguished.”

DSS Special Agent-in-Charge Robert Goodrich stated: “The Diplomatic Security Service is firmly committed to working with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and our law enforcement partners at the Homeland Security Investigation’s Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force, to investigate and bring to justice those who commit passport and visa fraud, which oftentimes leads to other criminal activities. This case demonstrates Diplomatic Security’s continuing commitment to safeguard the integrity of the U.S. passport and U.S. visa by vigorously investigating and bringing those who commit passport or visa fraud to justice.”

As alleged in the Indictment unsealed today:

All seven of the defendants with ties to the Gambino and Bonanno Organized Crime Families are charged with racketeering offenses. The other charges contained in the Indictment are outlined below:

Strip Club Extortions

(TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, COLON, GUTKOWSKI, FRASCONE, CASELLA, and ZAINO)

The named defendants are charged with extorting payments from the owners and operators of four Strip Clubs located in Queens and Long Island in exchange for “protection” from competing Strip Clubs and other organized crime figures. The protection included the resolution of disputes among Strip Clubs over the apportionment of illegal aliens from Russia and Eastern Europe to work at the clubs, and disputes over ownership interests in certain clubs.

Visa Fraud Conspiracy

(TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, GUTKOWSKI, CASELLA, ZAINO, KRAVETS, DEVITT, MONFORT, WANG, YUSUPOV, MINDYUK, KUZNETSOVA, TURUBANOVA, RINCHEY, ZELEDON, and BELESON)

The named defendants are charged with participating in a scheme that recruited Russian and other Eastern European women and assisted them in fraudulently obtaining summer work and travel visas. The defendants procured and sent these women false job offers for waitressing

and other positions they would then include on their visa applications. However, once the women arrived in the U.S., they worked as exotic dancers at the Strip Clubs, in violation of visa rules prohibiting employment in the adult entertainment industry.

Conspiracy to Transport, Harbor, and Induce Entry of Illegal Aliens
(TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, COLON, GUTKOWSKI, CASELLA, ZAINO, KRAVETS,
DEVITT, MONFORT, WANG, YUSUPOV, MINDYUK, KUZNETSOVA, TURUBANOVA,
IVANOVA, GUNNING, RINCHEY, ZELEDON, and BELESON)

The named defendants are alleged to have participated in a scheme to recruit women from Russia and other Eastern European countries through the Internet and newspapers to work as exotic dancers, and to fraudulently obtain visas so that the women could travel to the U.S. The scheme also involved housing these women at various residences and transporting them to and from the Strip Clubs.

Marriage Fraud Conspiracy
(KRAVETS, KUZNETSOVA, TURUBANOVA, IVANOVA, and GUNNING)

The named defendants are charged with operating a scheme in which many of the Russian and other Eastern European women recruited to work as exotic dancers were coupled with U.S. citizens to enter into fraudulent marriages intended solely to give the women legal status in the U.S.

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Mr. Bharara praised the investigative work of ICE HSI and DSS. He also thanked the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their assistance and noted that the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorneys Daniel Chung, Jonathan Cohen, and Michael Ferrara are in charge of the prosecution. The case is being handled by the Office's Organized Crime Unit.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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U.S. v. Trucchio, et al.

COUNT	CHARGE	DEFENDANTS	MAXIMUM PENALTIES
1	Racketeering Conspiracy	TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, COLON, GUTKOWSKI, FRASCONE, CASELLA, ZAINO	20 years in prison
2	Racketeering	TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, COLON, GUTKOWSKI, FRASCONE, CASELLA, ZAINO	20 years in prison
3	Extortion Conspiracy	FRASCONE, CASELLA, ZAINO	20 years in prison
4	Extortion Conspiracy	TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, COLON, FRASCONE, CASELLA, ZAINO	20 years in prison
5	Extortion Conspiracy	TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, COLON, GUTKOWSKI, FRASCONE, CASELLA, ZAINO	20 years in prison
6	Visa Fraud Conspiracy	TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, GUTKOWSKI, CASELLA, ZAINO, KRAVETS, DEVITT, MONFORT, WANG, YUSUPOV, MINDYUK, KUZNETSOVA, TURUBANOVA, RINCHEY, ZELEDON, BELESON	Five years in prison
7	Conspiracy to Transport, Harbor, and Induce the Entry of Illegal Aliens	TRUCCHIO, PAZIENZA, COLON, GUTKOWSKI, CASELLA, ZAINO, KRAVETS, DEVITT, MONFORT, WANG, YUSUPOV, MINDYUK, KUZNETSOVA, TURUBANOVA, IVANOVA, GUNNING, RINCHEY, ZELEDON, BELESON	10 years in prison
8	Marriage Fraud Conspiracy	KRAVETS, KUZNETSOVA, TURUBANOVA, IVANOVA, GUNNING	Five years in prison

DEFENDANT	RESIDENCE	AGE
ALPHONSE TRUCCHIO	Howard Beach, NY	34
WILLIAM PAZIENZA, SR.	Bronxville, NY	64
CHRISTOPHER COLON	Howard Beach, NY	37
RICHARD GUTKOWSKI	Ridgewood, NY	40

ANTHONY FRASCONE	East Meadow, NY	62
PAUL CASELLA	Franklin Square, NY	45
LAWRENCE ZAINO	Westbury, NY	44
ALEKSANDR KRAVETS	Brooklyn, NY	42
THOMAS DEVITT III	East Meadow, NY	43
GERALD MONFORT	West Babylon, NY	54
YONG WANG	Flushing, NY	36
BORIS YUSUPOV	Brooklyn, NY	36
VITALIY MINDYUK	Brooklyn, NY	43
ZHANNA KUZNETSOVA	Brooklyn, NY	24
ELENA TURUBANOVA	Dix Hills, NY	24
NATALIA IVANOVA	Kew Gardens, NY	43
CHRISTINE GUNNING	Windsor, NY	46
JEFFREY RINCHEY	Kew Gardens, NY	38
OSCAR ZELEDON	East Hampton, NY	39
ALEXANDER BELESON	Manalapan, NJ	53