

2 Supervisors Are Arrested After Sweep at Meat Plant

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Two supervisors at a kosher meatpacking plant in Iowa where hundreds of illegal immigrants were rounded up in May were arrested Thursday on criminal immigration charges.

Federal prosecutors said they had also issued an arrest warrant for a third man described by workers as a plant manager.

The supervisors, Juan Carlos Guerrero Espinoza and Martin De la Rosa Loera, were arrested at the Agriprocessors plant in Postville, prosecutors said. They were the first employees who were not rank-and-file workers to be arrested since 389 illegal immigrants were rounded up at the plant on May 12, said Bob Teig, a spokesman for the United States attorney for the Northern District of Iowa.

Federal authorities called the raid the largest enforcement operation by immigration authorities at a single workplace. Unions and immigrant advocacy groups had criticized immigration officials for focusing arrests on workers while taking no action against top managers.

The arrest warrant was issued for Hosam Amara, 43. In interviews after the raid, several workers said Mr. Amara was a floor manager with more authority than line supervisors. They said he was a link between workers on the slaughterhouse floors and meatpacking lines and more senior management.

Agriprocessors, which before the raid was the country's largest producer of kosher meat, is owned by Aaron Rubashkin. Two weeks after the raid, he removed his son Sholom as chief executive.

Most of the illegal immigrants arrested at the plant were from rural Guatemala. In expedited proceedings, 270 workers were sent to federal prison on criminal charges, most for presenting false documents when they were hired.

In a criminal complaint unsealed on Thursday, federal authorities said Mr. Guerrero was the supervisor of four departments in the Postville plant, including a slaughterhouse called Beef Kill. Workers cited anonymously in the complaint said Mr. Guerrero was running a business obtaining fraudulent immigration documents, known as green cards.

In the days before the raid, the workers said, according to the complaint, Mr. Guerrero told them in a meeting that "they needed new IDs and Social Security numbers to continue working at the company." Mr. Guerrero collected \$200 and a photograph from each worker, promising to provide new documents, the complaint says.

A former human resources employee cited in the complaint said Mr. Guerrero regularly brought in fake green cards for applicants.

A separate complaint says Mr. De la Rosa, a supervisor in Poultry Kill, also told illegal immigrant workers shortly before the raid that they needed new identity documents.

The complaints make it clear that a grand jury investigation of Agriprocessors is continuing.

Union officials said the new arrests did not go far enough.

“The arrest of two low-level supervisors, while a start, barely scratches the surface of this company’s bad behavior,” said Scott Frotman, a spokesman for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, which has tried to organize the plant. “What about the allegations of worker abuse? Does anyone really believe that these low-level supervisors acted alone without the knowledge, or even the direction, of the Rubashkins and other senior management?”

On Thursday in Houston, five senior managers of another company that was recently raided, Action Rags USA, made their initial court appearances. Those arrested on Wednesday included Mabarik Kahlon, 45, the owner of the company, an exporter of used clothing, and his partner Rasheed Ahmed, 58. About 160 workers were arrested on June 25 at the company’s plant in Houston.