

January 10, 2013
Los Angeles, CA

Canadian talent consultant charged in visa scam involving aspiring actors

LOS ANGELES – A Canadian national who operated a Los Angeles-area immigration consulting business that sought visas on behalf of aspiring foreign actors faces multiple criminal charges for allegedly cheating his clients out of thousands of dollars in an immigration scam.

Andrew Boryski, 26, was arrested Wednesday by special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) at Los Angeles International Airport as he prepared to board a flight bound for Canada.

The Saskatchewan native, who now resides in Los Angeles, is charged with 32 misdemeanor counts filed by the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, including three counts of grand theft, one count of practicing law without a license, and 28 counts of violating provisions of the Immigration Consultant Act. If convicted, Boryski could face up to one year in jail for each count.

"We will hold accountable charlatans who prey upon the career aspirations of others," said City Attorney Carmen Trutanich. "People who come to Los Angeles to work must be aware that it is illegal for immigration consultants to provide legal advice. Before paying them a penny, they should contact the appropriate agency and verify the consultant's credentials."

After receiving several complaints about Boryski, the City Attorney's Office sought HSI's assistance in investigating the case. Coincidentally, HSI had also received a lead about Boryski's possible involvement in immigration fraud from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) Office of Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS).

"This suspect, who's an aspiring actor himself, has landed a role in a real life crime drama," said Claude Arnold, special agent in charge for HSI Los Angeles. "The fraud perpetrated by unscrupulous consultants who prey on innocent victims undermines the integrity of our nation's legal immigration system and ultimately hurts us all. Homeland Security Investigations will continue to work tirelessly with its federal and local partners to ensure these scam artists don't succeed."

The ensuing joint investigation revealed Boryski advertised over the Internet and presented himself at actors' seminars as an immigration consultant who could help aspiring foreign actors obtain visas to work in the U.S. entertainment industry. Three complaining foreign witnesses, two from Australia and one from Ireland, allege Boryski charged them approximately \$5,000 each to assist them in procuring an O-1 visa.

The O-1 visa is intended for established performers with work pending in the United States – not for newcomers to the business without actual employment, as was the case with the victims. HSI

special agents determined Boryski never filed any paperwork on the victims' behalf and failed to follow through on repeated promises to refund the victims' money. Investigators found Boryski did not file an immigration consultant bond with the Secretary of State and was not licensed to practice law in California.

SAG-AFTRA National Executive Director David White praised authorities' efforts to pursue this case saying, "We applaud the work to protect actors from unscrupulous business practices that attempt to separate them from their money. Performers from all jurisdictions should be able to pursue their dreams in the entertainment industry without fear of abuse and harm."

SAG-AFTRA General Counsel Duncan Crabtree-Ireland advised performers to be wary and inform themselves saying, "Immigration service scams can have devastating consequences for any performer. All performers should take an active part in their own protection by practicing due diligence and getting educated about the rules and process for work visas." More information can be found on the [U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services website](#).

HSI's probe into Boryski's activities is ongoing. Investigators believe there may be additional unidentified victims. Anyone with relevant information should contact ICE's toll-free tip line at 1-866-DHS-2ICE or visit <http://www.ice.gov/exec/forms/hsi-tips/tips.asp>. Tips may be reported anonymously.

Deputy City Attorney Mark Lambert is prosecuting the case.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1301/130110losangeles.htm>