



U.S. Immigration
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Enforcement

News Releases

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OAKLAND, CA

Bay Area man sentenced for impersonating ICE officer and attempted extortion

OAKLAND, Calif. - A Redwood City, Calif., man was sentenced Wednesday to three years in prison and three years of supervised release following his conviction by a federal jury for conspiracy, impersonating a federal officer and attempted extortion.

Frank Salvador Solorza's sentencing came after a jury found him guilty of attempting to extort money from six individuals while posing as a federal immigration officer. The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). The jury also found that the 46-year-old had engaged in a conspiracy with others to commit these crimes.

Evidence at trial showed Solorza conspired with others to send letters purporting to be from a government immigration agency. The letters were directed to six individuals. The letters demanded money -- \$50,000 in total -- to clear up the immigration status of each individual. The letters threatened jail and deportation of each individual if the money was not paid.

After receiving the letters, the victims contacted ICE HSI, which immediately opened an investigation. The evidence at trial showed the defendant and others also called the individuals after delivery of the letters and continued to claim to be officials from a government immigration agency and to demand money. During these calls, the defendant and others designated a time and location for the victims to pay the money. The defendant was arrested by HSI agents when he arrived at the designated location at the designated time and attempted to collect the money. When arrested, the defendant was wearing a clown suit as a disguise and riding a child's bicycle.

"The prison term in this case is absolutely appropriate," said Shane Folden, special agent in charge for ICE HSI in San Francisco. "Regrettably, schemes like this involving the impersonation of federal officers potentially undermine the public's confidence in their government and law enforcement. HSI will continue to

aggressively pursue those who exploit innocent individuals for their own enrichment."

Solorza was originally indicted by a federal grand jury in February 2009. In October 2009, the grand jury returned a superseding indictment accusing him of one count of conspiracy, two counts of impersonating a federal officer, and two counts of attempted extortion by a federal official.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kevin Barry and Denise Marie Barton with the assistance of paralegal Suzanne G. Pouteau and legal assistants Hui Chen and Marina Ponomarchuk.