

## **New York Times**

### **Immigrant-Services Groups and Their Founder Are Frauds, Suit Says**

**By John Eligon**

**January 14, 2010**

Over the past 25 years, Edward Juarez-Pagliocco built a reputation as a national expert on immigrant affairs. His work earned him keys to cities in Florida and New Jersey, he had a radio show on WPAT-FM (93.1) in New York, and he wrote an immigration column for El Diario La Prensa, the Spanish-language daily.

But according to Andrew M. Cuomo, the New York State attorney general, Mr. Juarez-Pagliocco was not who he claimed to be.

The nonprofit foundations he started, the International Immigrants Foundation and the International Professional Association, promoted themselves as organizations that helped immigrants get their legal affairs in order. Instead, Mr. Cuomo's office contends in a lawsuit filed Thursday in State Supreme Court in Manhattan, they were companies that employed people who falsely claimed to be lawyers, often made things worse for the immigrants they promised to help, and overcharged for bogus services.

"These businesses make millions of dollars by exploiting the dreams of New York's immigrant community," Mr. Cuomo said in a statement.

Mr. Cuomo's office is suing Mr. Juarez-Pagliocco and his organizations, asking that the court force the groups to shut down and pay restitution to the people they worked for. The civil case is part of a larger inquiry into immigration services organizations.

Solomon Zabrowsky, a lawyer for Mr. Juarez-Pagliocco and his foundations, declined to comment on the specifics of the case. But he said that his clients "intend to vigorously defend themselves."

Mr. Juarez-Pagliocco used his foundations' money to support a lavish lifestyle, the lawsuit said. He paid the rent on his Midtown apartment — he also owns a house in New Jersey — financed his luxury car, parking space, cellphone, and travel and meal expenses with the foundations' money, the lawsuit said. Mr. Juarez-Pagliocco also used a foundation debit card to make hundreds of purchases at restaurants, bars, clubs, hotels and other places, as well as tens of thousands of dollars worth of A.T.M. withdrawals, the lawsuit said.

Justice Barbara R. Kapnick placed a temporary restraining order on the two organizations, prohibiting them from doing business and freezing their assets, a spokeswoman for Mr. Cuomo said.

Mr. Juarez-Pagliocco's companies advertised widely, and immigrants came to them for services like obtaining citizenship or a green card. In one case, a man seeking a green card paid the organizations more than \$18,000 but never got it because of the groups' delays and negligence, the statement said. Other clients faced deportation because of inadequate representation, the statement said.

El Diario released a statement on Thursday saying that it had suspended Mr. Juarez-Pagliocco's column.