

October 19, 2012

Newark, NJ

New Jersey man charged with impersonating federal officer

NEWARK, N.J. — A New Jersey man was arrested Oct. 12 on charges of falsely impersonating a federal officer in order to defraud aliens seeking immigration assistance. The arrest is the result of an investigation being conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR).

Ruben Alvarado, 27, of Elizabeth, N.J., is charged with one count of impersonating a federal officer and one count of identification document fraud.

According to court documents, from September 2009 through May 2011, Alvarado pretended to be an officer or employee acting under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), ICE and the Transportation Security Administration. Alvarado targeted victims, via Facebook and in person, who desired to obtain federal employment, legal status, or work or travel authorization in the United States.

Alvarado would provide his victims false approvals of their applications, often on forms inappropriate to the relief requested, that bore his signature as a purported officer of the United States. Alvarado would threaten victims who complained that the materials were not genuine by saying that his position at ICE vested him with the power to have them and their children deported. Alvarado took no action to further his victims' legal or employment status, but demanded and obtained payments from his victims totaling more than \$17,000.

If convicted of the impersonation charge, Alvarado faces three years in prison, and on the identification document fraud charge, 15 years in prison. Both also carry a maximum fine of \$250,000.

Assisting OPR in the investigation was the DHS Office of Inspector General in Miami, Fla., and the Union County (N.J.) Prosecutor's Office.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1210/121019newark.htm>