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Feds Raid Nearly a Dozen Long Island 7-Elevens in Illegal Immigration Probe: Officials

Some owners of the stores allegedly helped traffic workers from Pakistan

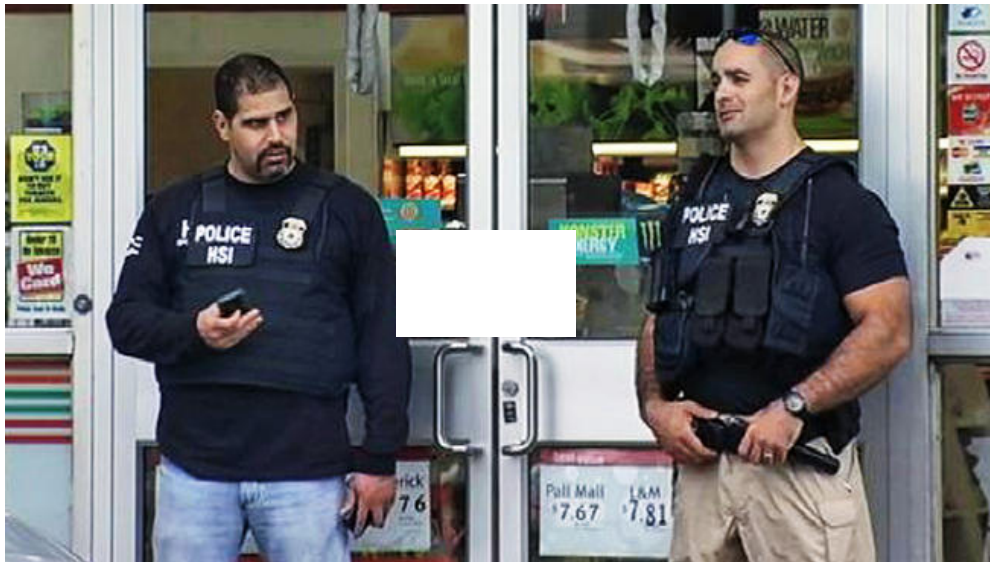
By [Jonathan Dienst](#) and [Greg Cergol](#) | Monday, Jun 17, 2013 | Updated 8:28 PM EDT

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NBC 4 New York

Nine owners and managers of more than a dozen 7-Eleven stores on Long Island and in Virginia were charged Monday in a scheme to traffic in workers from Pakistan to work their stores, provide them with identities stolen from U.S. citizens and steal a substantial portion of their wages, prosecutors said. Jonathan Dienst has the story.

Nine owners and managers of more than a dozen 7-Eleven stores on Long Island and in Virginia were charged Monday in a scheme to traffic in workers from Pakistan to work their stores, provide them with identities stolen from U.S. citizens and steal a substantial portion of their wages, prosecutors said.

The workers were allegedly forced to live in housing provided by the franchise owners and pay them cash rent, in addition to the funds that were skimmed off the top of their paychecks when the

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store owners received payroll from corporate headquarters, authorities said.

More than a dozen workers believed to have been brought to the country illegally were taken into immigration custody, though the scheme involved the hirings of at least 50 illegal immigrants since 2000, according to court documents.

Investigators executed search warrants at about 30 7-Eleven stores across the country as part of the probe, including 10 on Long Island. Suffolk County police, federal Homeland Security investigators, IRS and NYPD officers were seen entering several of the store locations in New York Monday.

Officials said investigators were checking more than 40 additional 7-Eleven stores across the New York area to see if there were similar abuses.

The suspects taken into custody Monday face charges of wire fraud conspiracy, harboring illegal immigrants and aggravated identity theft. Federal authorities have also moved to forfeit the franchise rights to the 14 7-Eleven stores owned by the suspects, as well as the five homes where the illegal immigrants were allegedly forced to stay once they were brought to the United States.

The stolen identities they were equipped with belong to victims from seven states, ranging in age from 8 to 78, and include three dead people and a Coast Guard cadet, officials said.

In a statement, 7-Eleven said the company has been cooperating with federal authorities and will take "aggressive actions to audit the employment status of all its franchisees' employees."

"In bedroom communities across Long Island and Virginia, the defendants not only systematically employed illegal immigrants, but concealed their crimes by raiding the cradle and the grave to steal the identities of children and even the dead," U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch said in a statement.

"These defendants ruthlessly exploited their immigrant employees, stealing their wages and requiring them to live in unregulated boarding houses, in effect creating a modern day plantation system."

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Chris Leehey · Panhandle Skateboarding

DEPORT all of the owners and confiscate ALL of their evil-gotten properties.....as well as all of their gold that they like to wear.

Reply · 47 · Like · Follow Post · June 17 at 5:56am



Jessie Reynolds · Top Commenter · Legal Assistant at Beatty & Wozniak, P.C.

That would likely depend on their citizenship status. I see nowhere in the article that



Commander in SS-Led Unit Living in U.S.



that would likely depend on their citizenship status. I see nowhere in the article that indicates that the franchise owners were not legal residents or even American citizens.

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Samuel Chappell · [Follow](#) · Top Commenter · The University of Southern Mississippi

Does it matter? Let's put the shoe on the other foot, and see how these guys like being exploited. It's bad enough that Homeland won't go after more employers of illegal immigrants. They just focus on people like these. IDEA – find out what attracted the attention of homeland, and see if you can get the same evidence against other employers. More bang for our tax dollars.

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Jazmyn

my friend's mother-in-law makes \$78 hourly on the laptop. She has been out of work for eight months but last month her check was \$21444 just working on the laptop for a few hours. Go to this web site and read more www.jobs34.com

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James Scribner · Palmdale High School

It's not going to stop there, how about all the hotels and other cash heavy business...

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Jacqueline Jackson Moustafa · Top Commenter

Does 7-Eleven just sell the franchise and look the other way? They are responsible as well.

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Roy Field · Top Commenter · Works at Marines

Yep!

[Reply](#) · [2](#) · [Like](#) · June 17 at 10:53am



Ola Coola · New York, New York

7-Eleven stores owned by Indians and Pakistanis are rumored to bring illegal immigrants from India and Pakistan as tourists and make them stay illegally. Put them in jail.

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Troy Hendrickson · Top Commenter · Boone, Iowa

You have proof? Or are you just another typical racist tea bagger.

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Riley Powell · Top Commenter

Troy Hendrickson – Tea Party supporters are not racist, they are patriots, as opposed to the wildly liberal, constitution hating, silly socialist Democrat Party.

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Roy Field · Top Commenter · Works at Marines

Toy the BOY, the article is proof. I know innocent until proven guilty, but where there is smoke there is fire!

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Richard C Heckroth

It's about effin time,

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Roy Field · Top Commenter · Works at Marines

Long over due. I wonder why now. Who is behind the crack down? That is the real interesting part here. There are some suspicious motives at play here.

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Bill Lundy · [Follow](#) · Ray High School

Okay, I'll bite. Aside from the fact that it's Homeland Security doing their job after what is likely a lengthy investigation, where is the suspicious motives at play here that you allude to? If not now, when?

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William Johnson · Top Commenter · Ann Arbor, Michigan

Roy I bet you never heard a conspiracy theory you didn't like.

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Raymond James · Follow · Top Commenter · Central Texas College

This is the type of immigration / border enforcement we need to secure our borders and to help these migrants out who were lied too and mistreated by their masters/owners/employers.

We could stop most illegal immigration if we enforced employee hiring laws. Work place enforcement is the way to go not more agents /radars on the border.

Reply · 11 · Like · Follow Post · June 17 at 6:58am



Robert Bertram · Nowhere

dang I hate to agree with you Raymond. but you are right, enforce employment laws and you take away the incentive for illegals assuming we cut off social benefits as well

Reply · 6 · Like · June 17 at 7:11am

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