



U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

**United States  
Secret Service**

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **U.S. SECRET SERVICE INVESTIGATION DISMANTLES COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY RING**

### ***13 Members of an International Counterfeiting Network Indicted on Racketeering and Counterfeit Currency Charges***

**(Washington, D.C.)** - On August 7, 2014, a federal grand jury returned a superseding indictment in the Eastern District of Virginia, charging 10 members of the criminal enterprise with one count of Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) conspiracy, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1962(d), and one count of conspiracy to commit various counterfeiting U. S. currency offenses. The grand jury also returned superseding indictments charging the three additional defendants with participating in the counterfeiting conspiracy. All defendants were arrested between May and June, pursuant to criminal complaints and indictments issued by a federal grand jury on June 5, 2014.

The defendants charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to commit various counterfeiting U.S. currency offenses are: Itzhak Loz, 46, of Rison Lezion, Israel; Ronin Fakiro, 45, of Rison Lezion, Israel; Arkadiy Bangiyev, 37, of Rego Park, NY; Eduard Bangiyev, 39, of Forest Hills, NY; Boaz Borohov, 43, of Tel Aviv, Israel; Ofra Borohov, 45, of Tel Aviv, Israel; Tarell Johnson, 26, of Lynbrook, NY; Shannon Lamont Smith, 38, of Woodstock, GA; Johnny Elegante Lee, 44, of Glen Oaks, NY; and Craig Johnson, 48, of Douglasville, GA.

The defendants charged with participating in the counterfeiting conspiracy are Ramel Epps, 23, of Freeport, NY; Fredrick Barrett, 32, of Hempstead, NY; and Brattie Guerra, 22, of Freeport, NY.

“This case highlights the Secret Service’s investigative skills in detecting and dismantling highly sophisticated criminal enterprises targeting the United States,” said Secret Service Director Julia Pierson. “I am proud of the combined efforts of our workforce in resolving this significant transnational case. This investigation joins a long list of successes in suppressing counterfeit U.S. currency over our 149 year history.”

Beginning in 1999, the Secret Service began detecting highly deceptive counterfeit \$100 Federal Reserve Notes (FRNs) in New York City. The counterfeit bills, which are believed to have been manufactured in Israel through off-set printing, have been circulated predominately along the I-95 corridor and eastern United States. More recently, beginning in January 2014, the enterprise allegedly established a domestic printing plant in New Jersey. Since the detection of this counterfeit note, over \$77.4 million has been passed or seized by law enforcement globally.

From May 28 to June 13, 2014 the Secret Service executed multiple federal arrest and search warrants across New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Florida. This culminated in the suppression of a highly sophisticated counterfeit printing plant in New Jersey that is suspected of producing one of the most prolific counterfeit notes in history. During the federal search warrants, agents seized: one Heidelberg off-set printing machine; one Ryobi offset printing machine; three printing machines; computer equipment; approximately \$240,700 in genuine U.S. currency; and approximately \$2.5 million in counterfeit FRNs.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Secret Service's Washington Field Office, with assistance from multiple Secret Service field and resident offices in Philadelphia, New York, Miami, Atlanta, Long Island, and Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Throughout the investigation, the Secret Service worked closely with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Prince William County Police Department, the Stafford County Sheriff's Office; and the police departments of Cherry Hill, New Jersey; Mt. Laurel, New Jersey; Nassau County, New York; Rockville Centre, New York; and Woodstock, Georgia.

### **About the United States Secret Service**

The United States Secret Service was originally founded in 1865 for the purpose of suppressing the counterfeiting of U.S. currency. Now an agency within the Department of Homeland Security, the Secret Service is widely known for its protective mission in safeguarding the nation's highest elected officials, visiting foreign dignitaries and events of national significance. Today, the Secret Service maintains a unique dual mission of protection and investigations, as one of the premier law enforcement organizations charged with investigating cyber and financial crimes.

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: For questions concerning this release, please contact the U.S. Secret Service Office of Government and Public Affairs at 202-406-5708.*