

**Assistant Secretary Julie Myers**

**Remarks at a News Conference Announcing a  
Worksite Enforcement Operation at a Nationwide Meat  
Processor**

**Dec. 13, 2006  
Washington, D.C.**

**Thank you, Secretary Chertoff**

**This investigation began in February 2006 as a result of information provided by local police and developed during ICE's Criminal Alien Program - CAP.**

**Under CAP, ICE agents process aliens who are being held in state or local jails for removal following completion of their sentences.**

**In this case, ICE agents conducting CAP interviews in Marshalltown, IA, found a troubling pattern – they interviewed a number of criminal aliens who said they had worked at Swift and who admitted that they had assumed identities in order to circumvent employment eligibility screening.**

**In addition, ICE received referrals from outside police agencies and several calls to its hotline from anonymous individuals who reported illegal aliens working at Swift.**

**These factors led us to open our investigation. Over the past several months, the investigation uncovered substantial evidence that hundreds of the illegal aliens working for Swift had apparently stolen the identities of U.S. citizens, and improperly used their Social Security numbers and dates of birth to gain employment. The illegal aliens had obtained these ID documents from a variety of document rings and vendors.**

**Yesterday's operation was, first and foremost, a worksite enforcement operation where we determined which Swift workers were without valid immigration status and took them into custody on immigration charges. Indeed, Operation Wagon Train is the single largest worksite enforcement operation to date. A number of individuals have also been charged with the state crime of identity theft in Colorado and Utah.**

**This operation is an outgrowth of ICE's current worksite enforcement strategy -- a comprehensive approach that focuses on how illegal aliens get to our country, the ways in which they obtain identity documents allowing them to become employed, and the employers who knowingly hire them.**

**ICE's new strategy has been built on an extensive review of past efforts to control illegal employment. And the history is clear and undisputed: Ever since the establishment of employment verification requirements in 1986, the use of fraudulent documents by illegal aliens seeking employment has been a significant problem.**

**In recent years, however, this fraud has evolved into a disturbing new trend. Now, instead of obtaining fraudulent documents with fraudulent identities, illegal aliens are buying genuine documents with REAL identities – identities of unwitting US citizens!**

**Combating this burgeoning problem is one of ICE's highest priorities. In April of this year, ICE and DOJ established document and benefit**

**fraud task force operations in 11 major cities throughout the United States.**

**The goal of these multi-agency task forces is to target and take down the criminals and organizations that produce and sell the fraudulent documents, the stolen identity information and the other products used in immigration-related identity theft and benefit fraud.**

**Identity theft is widely reported as the largest and fastest growing crime in America, and this case indicates that illegal immigration may be a driving force behind that growth.**

**I would like to thank our partners at the DOJ who have vigorously supported our efforts, including the Deputy AG's offices, the US Attorneys who prepared the civil search warrants, the AUSAs who are assisting in the criminal investigations and the Civil Division, who defended us well in the lawsuit Swift filed against us to try to block this action. I would also like to thank the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor, and the District Attorneys from Cash and Weld**

**Counties, who have assisted the investigation by obtaining state arrest warrants against some of our subjects.**