

United States Postal Inspection Service:

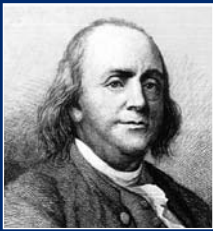
Because the Mail Matters



In the Nation's Service

A Chronology of the United States Postal Inspection Service

1737



Postmaster Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia given the task of “regulating the several post offices and bringing the postmasters to account.”

1772

Under the colonial postal system, Postmaster General Benjamin Franklin creates the position of “Surveyor” because he could no longer single-handedly regulate and audit post offices.

1776



Surveyors establish and keep open lines of communication necessary to conduct the

Revolutionary War. William Goddard named as the nation’s first Surveyor of the new American postal service.

1792

Congress imposes the death penalty for stealing mail.

1801

Title of Surveyor changed to “Special Agent.”

1812

Special Agents observe and report on movements of the British fleet on the Potomac River during the War of 1812.

1828

Noah Webster, who was one of the first Surveyors, publishes his dictionary.

1829

Preston S. Loughborough is appointed as the first Chief Postal Inspector.



1830

Office of Instructions and Mail Depredations is established as the investigative branch of the Post Office Department.

1853

The number of Special Agents grows to 18. Assigned to specific territories, their duties include reporting on the conditions of



steamboats, stagecoaches, railroads, and horses used to transport mail; visiting mail distribution offices; and examining postal accounts.

1861

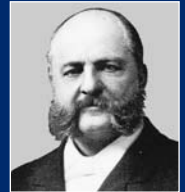
Special Agents establish and maintain military post offices and routes during the Civil War.

1872

Congress enacts the Mail Fraud Statute to combat a post-Civil War outbreak of swindles using the mail.

1873

The Postal Obscenity Statute is enacted by Congress, based on the urging of Special Agent Anthony Comstock.



1880

Special Agents become known as “Post Office Inspectors” by Act of Congress.

“Green Goods” swindles are exposed. Congress strengthens the Mail Fraud Statute to protect citizens from bogus offers in the mail.

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All Americans

have the *right* to mail and receive letters and parcels with every expectation that no one will tamper with or steal their mail.

All users of the mail have the *right* to be protected from mail fraud and other mail-related criminal activities.

And *all* postal employees and customers have the *right* to work or conduct business in a safe and secure environment.

But those rights themselves must be protected.

That's where we come in. We're the **United States Postal Inspection Service**—the federal law enforcement and security arm of the U.S. Postal Service®.

The Postal Inspection Service ensures the safety, security, and integrity of the U.S. Mail®.

Our mission is to safeguard the sanctity of the U.S. Mail and, in so doing, aggressively combat mail theft and fraud. Our 1,600 Postal Inspectors investigate postal-related


Safeguarding the Mail

In an average year, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service:

- arrests about 10,000 criminal suspects; many of the arrests are for mail theft or possession of stolen mail.
- responds to an average of 900 postal-related assaults and credible threats, resulting in hundreds of arrests.
- investigates roughly 3,000 mail fraud cases, resulting in some 1,300 arrests and millions of dollars in restitution.
- investigates about 4,000 reports of suspicious substances and items in the mail, including mail bombs; the overwhelming majority of incidents are nonhazardous.

Continued

crimes, such as identity theft, mail bombs, postal robberies, and burglaries. And we protect against the use of the mail to launder drug money, traffic in illegal drugs, and exploit children.



Carrying out our mission also means ensuring postal employees, customers, and some 37,000 postal facilities are safe from criminal attack and the nation's mail system is protected from criminal misuse. And all 3,000 of us—from Postal Inspectors and Postal Police Officers to forensic experts and analysts—are thoroughly trained and dedicated to our mission. Whether dealing with mail thieves in Colonial times, stagecoach robbers in the 1800s, gangsters in the 1930s, the Unabomber in the 1980s and '90s, or anthrax mailings in this century—we are there.

If it has *anything* to do with safeguarding the safety, security, and integrity of the nation's mail system from criminal misuse, we do it. And we've been doing it—and doing it successfully—since the nation was founded more than 225 years ago.

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service. *Because the mail matters.*TM

- investigates about 100 robberies of postal employees and facilities and two times that many burglaries of postal facilities.

- responds to more than 27,000 consumer fraud complaints, including reports of identity theft.

- arrests hundreds of suspects for child sexual exploitation offenses related to the mail, identifies child molesters, and rescues hundreds of child victims.

- arrests roughly 1,000 suspects for drug trafficking and money laundering via the mail.

- conducts some 3,000 forensic examinations, makes scores of court appearances to provide expert testimony, and identifies more than 500 suspected violators of postal statutes.



Americans have an almost sacred expectation when it comes to their daily “Mail Moment.” They have complete confidence their mail will be delivered in a timely manner. And they trust it will not have been tampered with or stolen.

That confidence and trust are preserved by one of America’s oldest federal law enforcement agencies—the **United States Postal Inspection Service**.

It’s a trust well-placed. And one we take very seriously.

Every day, the U.S. Postal Service delivers about 700 *million* pieces of mail to U.S. households and businesses. And, *every day*, the Postal Inspection Service is there, protecting the U.S. Postal Service, securing and ensuring the nation’s mail system, and ensuring public trust in the U.S. Mail.

Indeed, the Postal Inspection Service specifically is empowered by Congress “to investigate postal offenses and civil matters relating to the Postal Service.” We’re known among our law-enforcement colleagues as the “Silent Service” because most of our investigations are conducted without publicity and

fanfare. Nonetheless, our work impacts the daily lives of *all* Americans in positive ways.

When a thief takes something out of your mailbox or a scam artist puts something in it—Postal Inspectors are on the case.

When a postal employee is assaulted, when a Post Office™ is robbed, when a criminal mails drugs or a bomb—Postal Inspectors immediately investigate.

When a natural disaster hits—Postal Inspectors are on the scene, helping restore vitally needed mail service.

It comes down to this: *Whenever* and *wherever* a crime occurs involving postal employees, customers, property, or Postal Service revenues or assets, highly trained and experienced Postal Inspectors immediately are called in. And to the criminal elements who prey on postal customers, the arrival of Postal Inspectors means their crime games against the Postal Service and society are about to end.

Postal Inspectors are tenacious federal law enforcement agents. They carry firearms, make arrests, execute federal search warrants, and serve subpoenas. They also work in close cooperation with various other

law enforcement agencies to investigate all manner of postal crimes and expertly prepare criminal cases for court.

Postal Inspectors are strategically stationed throughout the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. They also report for work in Puerto Rico; Guam; Germany; England; Interpol headquarters in Lyon, France; The Hague, Netherlands; and at Universal Postal Union headquarters in Berne, Switzerland.

The success rate of the agency in winning convictions has been a remarkable achievement. Ironically, that fact has not been lost on postal criminals themselves. Thirties' crime boss "Dutch" Schultz once lamented that, like himself, a person would have to be "plenty stupid" to commit a crime against what was then the Post Office Department.

Methods used by criminals today to steal mail vary widely and are increasingly more sophisticated

On the trail of 'Billy the Kid'

The following is excerpted from a dispatch mailed Jan. 11, 1881, to Col. D.B. Parker, Chief Postal Inspector of the Post Office Department:

"On my recent trip to New Mexico, I stopped at Santa Fe to learn as much as possible in regard to the mail robbers who had recently been arrested and their doings. ...

"William Bonney (alias, the Kid) is held for murder. He is supposed to have killed some 11 men, but that is an exaggeration [sic]; four or five would be quite enough. He is about 21 or 23 years of age, born in New York City, and a graduate of the streets.

"I think his principle [sic] business has been stealing cattle and raiding in Old Mexico, and there robbing stores and valuables from wealthy ranchmen. He has probably done something in the line of stage robbing, but refuses to say anything about it, denying all knowledge of the business."

The letter was signed:

"Very truly yours, Robt. Cameron,
Inspector."



than in Schultz' time. Fortunately, only a tiny fraction of the mail the Postal Service handles falls prey to thieves. But, every piece of mail in the mailstream



every day in America is important. And any piece that is stolen is significant. On average, Postal Inspectors make roughly 10 arrests every day for mail-theft offenses.

Although mail theft can occur almost anywhere, the theft of large volumes of mail by gangs—“volume attacks,” we call them—are on the increase. Mail theft at domestic and international airports also is on the rise. A constant vigil must be maintained.

It doesn't matter what the mailpiece is. A greeting card from Aunt Minnie. A multimillion-dollar credit card promotion. A retiree's eagerly anticipated annuity check.

No matter what mail a thief may target, all postal customers are guaranteed equal access to the agency's formidable investigative powers and resources.

And it's all included in the price of postage!

Solving cases and putting criminals behind bars often require the support of scientific and technical personnel. That's why the Postal Inspection Service staffs its own ultra-modern National Forensic Laboratory just outside Washington, DC, and two technical services field offices.

It's an amazing operation.

Forensic analysts routinely aid in criminal investigations by providing

document, fingerprint, chemical, and even digital and other high-tech physical evidence analysis. Dedicated lab personnel assist in processing and evaluating critical evidence. And staff chemists conduct thorough scientific analyses of suspected controlled substances transported through the mail.

As serious as mail theft losses can be, there is the potential for even greater damage to occur. If left unchecked, mail

'As damnably composed as a concrete post'

With a perverse sense of pride, many Postal Inspection Service offices display the following article from the *Tombstone Epitaph*, an Arizona newspaper at the turn of the 19th century:

“A typical Post Office Inspector is a man past middle age—spare, wrinkled, intelligent, cold, passive, noncommittal, with eyes like a codfish, polite in contact but, at the time, nonresponsive; calm, and as damnably composed as a concrete post or a plaster of Paris case; a petrification with a beard of feldspar and without charm or the friendly germ; minus passion or a sense of humor. Happily, they never reproduce and all of them finally go to h—.”

'Who are those guys?'

The line was an instant classic in the 1969 movie release, "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid."

Butch and "the Kid," played by Paul Newman and Robert Redford, again rob a Union Pacific Railroad mail car—for the last time, as it turns out. As the pair make their overland escape on horseback, they marvel at the dogged determination of the posse following them.

"Who are those guys?" the pair often query in amazement and, oddly enough, respect.

Well, *those* guys were Postal Inspectors.



theft could erode the mailing public's confidence in what federal statutes refer to as the "sanctity of the seal." In more contemporary language, that means: "Don't mess with the U.S. Mail!"

It's a right embodied in the U.S. Constitution.

Consider for a moment this fact: On any given day, there are *more than one million* credit cards in the mail-stream—an obvious security concern of Postal Inspectors.

It's a concern that a few years ago led the Postal Inspection Service and the credit card industry to act on an ingenious suggestion—*one made by a Postal Inspector!* The idea was to ensure that a credit card mailed to someone was unusable until the intended user actually received the card and called the credit card issuer to have it activated.

The idea not only proved workable in a technical sense but has significantly reduced credit card fraud losses. Since the initiative was implemented, the theft of credit cards from the mail has *declined 80 percent!*

The Postal Inspection Service also is actively



involved in helping *prevent* crimes against postal customers and employees.

A case in point: The likelihood of anyone receiving a bomb in the mail, much less being injured by one, is extremely low. Nonetheless, stringent safeguards must be in place to prevent mail bomb disasters. An integral part of that effort is a public information campaign to alert customers and postal employees alike as to what safety measures to take if a letter or parcel looks at all suspicious.

Postal Inspectors also work closely with concerned citizens and neighborhood crime prevention groups to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity. Of particular emphasis are safeguards to prevent assaults on the nation's more than 170,000 letter carriers.

For obvious security reasons, we can't discuss the specifics of what the Postal Inspection Service does to protect postal facilities from attack. We *can* say, however, that the aggressive preventative measures we employ—

coupled with tough criminal penalties—have led to a significant reduction in postal robberies and burglaries in recent years. In fact, out of more than 37,000 postal facilities nationwide, fewer than 100 are robbed each year.

Contributing greatly to our ongoing achievements is the work of our roughly 800 uniformed Postal Police Officers. These highly trained Postal Inspection Service employees assume many responsibilities, such as providing perimeter security in high-risk postal areas and escorting high-value mail shipments.

Tamper with the mail, pay the price

In a period of two years—from 1920 to 1921—36 major mail robberies were committed, with the thefts totaling more than \$6 million. Postmaster General Will H. Hays issued an order directing that some 50,000 guns and 2 million rounds of ammunition be distributed and also offered a maximum reward of \$5,000 for mail robbers—*dead or alive!*

Postal Inspectors recovered more than half of the stolen amount, arrested 123 people and, with the exception of a few who were discharged or acquitted, helped ensure the remainder served long penitentiary terms.

In the detection and apprehension of the bandits, Postal Inspectors served notice to the underworld that they *never* give up if the mails are tampered with and, whether it takes a week or a year, swift and sure justice awaited criminals in the federal courts.

Postal Inspectors among the first to use ‘Tommy guns’

Perhaps the most widely recognized firearm anywhere in the world is the Thompson submachine gun—the “Tommy gun.”

It may surprise some people to learn that the first government agency to use any quantity of Thompsons was the Post Office Department. In an effort to curb a sudden increase in mail robberies in the early '20s, 250 of the guns were purchased.

Interestingly, when the U.S. Marines landed in Nicaragua and Shanghai in 1927, they were supplied with Post Office “Tommy guns.”

The Postal Inspection Service aggressively pursues public education efforts to help thwart thieves in many relatively new criminal endeavors. No longer are some thieves satisfied to blatantly steal items of obvious value from the mail. They’ve learned how to steal from the mail by using a computer.

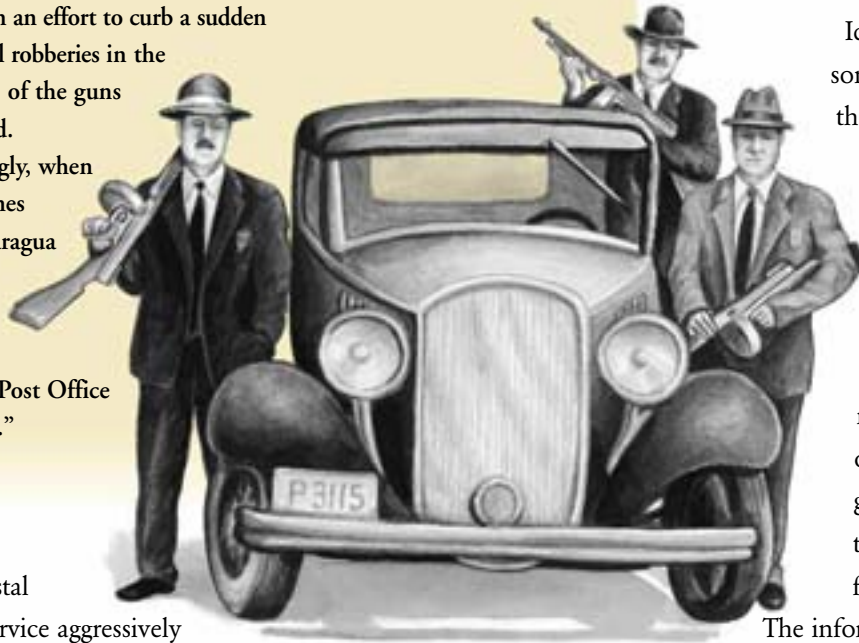
For example, more and more thieves are committing “identity theft.” It’s an insidious crime. And, chances are, you’d have no idea you’ve become a

victim of identity theft until a great deal of financial damage has been done. Damage that often can’t be undone.

Identity theft is personal. It violates everything that is you. It involves someone unlawfully accessing your date of birth, Social Security number, mother’s maiden name, and other identification to gain unlawful access to your personal and financial information.

The information may come from financial documents stolen from the mail.

The number of identity theft victims continues to grow each year. Identity thieves can wreak financial havoc with your credit cards. They can switch funds from your bank account to theirs. They can divert your new blank-check order to themselves. They can even have your annuity check sent directly to them. The list goes on.





Because of the extensive use of the mail to commit these crimes, the Postal Inspection Service has become a leading agency in investigating identity theft and in preventing consumers from being victimized by unscrupulous scam artists.

You've heard the world of the Internet referred

No hiding for nation's 'Public Enemy #1'

In the 1930s, before there was an FBI "10 Most Wanted" list, a man named Alvin Karpis was "Public Enemy #1." From the *Annual Report of the Postmaster General* for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1936:

"On the afternoon of Nov. 7, 1935—in a spectacular machine-gun holdup of an Erie Railroad mail train at Garrettsville, OH, Karpis and four other men stole Registered Mail containing \$34,000 in currency and \$11,650 in bonds. Karpis was found by Post Office Inspectors to have been the leader of the bandits. ...

"In March 1936...Inspectors and a member of the Kansas State police apprehended one of the gang. Several weeks later, Karpis and two more of the gang were arrested. ... Inspectors have identified...the fifth bandit, and they hope to take him into custody in the near future."

to as "cyberspace." Well, where there's cyberspace, there's *cybercrime*. And Postal Inspectors have an obligation to combat it, too.

Why? Because fraud on the Internet becomes mail fraud when payments for illegal schemes are received via the mail. Thieves who commit more than half of all tracked Internet fraud are paid with either a check or money order dropped in the mail.

Apart from the outright theft of the mail are countless illegal schemes that violate the nation's oldest consumer law—the Mail Fraud Statute enacted in 1872. Over the years, Postal Inspectors have investigated more illegal "boiler room" operations than any other law enforcement agency.

Have you ever been the victim of mail fraud? You might not necessarily know if you were! The most common examples of mail fraud against consumers are illegal contest and sweepstakes schemes, chain letters, travel and vacation fraud, merchandise misrepresentations, phony billing scams, and fraudulent investment "opportunities," to name but a few.

And then there are work-at-home schemes, rebate fraud, foreign lottery fraud—all through the mail. If there's illegal money to be made in connec-

tion with operating a mail fraud, you can bet some scam artist is doing it.

Older citizens, the physically challenged, “shut-ins,” and the disadvantaged conveniently receive many of their purchases by mail. Sadly, that makes them easy prey for mail fraud operators. To make matters worse, these operators sell their ill-gotten mail lists to other criminal elements, resulting in the repeated victimization of many elderly citizens.

Mail fraud against businesses also is a major concern to the Postal Inspection Service. Fraudulent schemes targeting businesses range from the inept to the ingenious. On the more damaging end of the scale are found the submission of bogus accidental death insurance policies to insurance companies, fraudulent telephone business directory solicitations, and scams involving dummy companies used to apply for bank loans and obtain investor funds.

Unfortunately, mail fraud is expected to increase as criminals access the Internet and use Web sites and

Stupid, yes, but not *that* stupid

Because Postal Inspectors prefer to perform their duties largely in anonymity, the Postal Inspection Service has come to be known as “The Silent Service.”

That doesn’t mean, however, that the criminal elements of society aren’t well aware of the agency’s remarkable success rate in winning convictions.

A case in point involved a small country store that also housed the community’s Post Office. When thieves burglarized the store in the late 1960s, they carefully chalked a line between the commercial and postal areas. On the postal side of the line, the following inscription was marked:

“Inspectors, we didn’t cross this line.”

Apparently true to their word, the thieves took only store goods. They didn’t disturb a single item of Post Office equipment.

chat rooms to operate their fraudulent schemes on a much wider scale. The Postal Inspection Service is helping combat that trend by operating a successful Internet fraud initiative in cooperation with Internet service providers, consumer protection organizations, and others.

In another area of public service to the country, Postal Inspectors play a key role in helping wage the nation’s war on illegal drugs. In fact, their work to identify and prosecute major drug mailers and intercept illegal drug proceeds that traffickers attempt to send through the mail is well-known and respected.



On average, 1,000 suspects are arrested by Postal Inspectors each year for trafficking drugs and “laundering”—disguising the source of—drug money via the U.S. Mail. In addition to seizing cash obtained through criminal activity, Postal Inspectors have used federal forfeiture laws to seize houses, vehicles, boats, artwork, and other high-value items purchased with drug money.

More than a century ago, the Postal Inspection Service began waging a relentless battle against the purveyors of smut shipped via the U.S. Mail. In fact, the 1873 Comstock Act—the federal postal obscenity law—was named after Postal Inspector Anthony Comstock, whose obscenity investigations became a personal crusade.

In the 1970s, Postal Inspectors expanded their investigations of illicit materials in the mail to include one of the more heinous crimes of contemporary times—the sexual exploitation of children.

Today, with more and more unlawful computer transmissions and child pornography on the Internet, use of the mail to transport child pornography has increased and our investigative commitment continues.

Working in close cooperation with the

Department of Justice and other agencies, the Postal Inspection Service has earned a well-deserved reputation as a true leader in the war against child sexual exploitation. Since passage of the Child Protection Act in 1984, Postal Inspectors have arrested thousands of child pornographers and molesters for trafficking child pornography through the mail and, in the process, saved hundreds of children from further sexual abuse.

**Well, there you have it.
Safety. Security. Integrity. When
these issues relate to the U.S. Mail—
as invariably they do—they relate
directly to the work of the United
States Postal Inspection Service.**

**So, think of us the next time
you place a stamp on an envelope
or mail a parcel. As your mail is
hurried to its destination—safely
and securely—*we’ll* certainly be
thinking about *you*.**

1881

Post Office Inspectors interview “Billy the Kid” in connection with a mail robbery in Santa Fe, NM.

1908



In Clinton, MS, Inspector Charles Fitzgerald is the first Post Office

Inspector killed in the line of duty.

1916

The last known stagecoach robbery in the United States is solved by Post Office Inspectors, who apprehend the bandits within five days of the crime.



1925

Inspectors quell heavy outbreak of train robberies and post office holdups.

1926



Post Office Inspectors successfully conclude a 31/2-year, worldwide manhunt for three train bandits known as the D'Autremont brothers. The brothers killed four men and blew up a mail car, which they thought was carrying half a million dollars in gold.

1934

When the nation's \$15.5 billion gold reserve is transferred from New York to Fort Knox, Post Office Inspectors plan the movement and protection of the bullion, which was sent by registered mail. The transfer required 500 rail cars, took several years and was completed without a mishap.

1940

The first of five Postal Inspection Service forensic laboratories is established.



1941

Post Office Inspectors organized the mail system for the military during World War II. The system is so efficient that even front-line troops expect mail delivery as normal procedure.

1947

Jesse M. Donaldson, the Chief Postal Inspector, is appointed Postmaster General.

1954

Inspectors are renamed “Postal Inspector” to reflect their relationship to all phases of postal services and the U.S. Mail, instead of only to post offices.



1958

Owners of the Hope Diamond send the priceless jewel to the Smithsonian Institution by U.S. Mail. Postal Inspectors ensured that the gem arrived safely at its destination.

1970-1971

With the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 (effective 1971), the Bureau of the Chief Postal Inspector becomes the “United States Postal Inspection Service.” A uniformed security force is added to assist in carrying out the Inspection Service’s mission.



1971

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service becomes one of the first federal law enforcement agencies to hire female agents.



1972

Postal Inspectors and Postal Inspection Service forensic scientists prove that a handwritten note giving Clifford Irving exclusive rights to write Howard Hughes' biography was a fraud.

1984

The passage of the Child Protection Act gives Postal Inspectors additional powers to focus on the peddlers of child pornography.

1987

Investigations by Postal Inspectors reveal widespread white-collar crime on Wall

Street, including insider trading and a massive check-kiting scheme.

1989

Postal Inspectors arrest televangelist Jim Bakker, cofounder of the Praise the Lord (PTL) Club. Inspectors proved Bakker committed mail fraud after he scammed believers by using \$178 million of their mailed-in money for personal gain. He is sentenced to 45 years in prison.

1991

The Postal Inspection Service breaks up a worldwide art-fraud ring that marketed bogus paintings purported to be by such renowned artists as Salvador Dali, Joan Miro, and Pablo Picasso.

1998

Postal Inspectors play an integral role on a multi-agency task force that arrests the Unabomber, marking the end



of one of the largest and most extensive criminal manhunts in modern history.

2001

"Operation Avalanche," a coordinated strike between the Postal Inspection Service and 30 other federally funded task forces, results in the arrest of 100 child pornographers and molesters who used the mail and the Internet to sexually exploit children.

2006



The 2 SMRT 4U campaign was aimed at teen girls, the group most targeted by online sexual predators, and included a Web site to educate teens about how to chat and post wisely online (www.2smrt4u.com). The Postal Inspection Service was honored with the Justice

Department's Internet Safety Award for its dedication to protecting children and fighting child exploitation.



2008

Postal Inspectors investigated William Lerach, father of the "class action lawsuit," and Melvyn Weiss, of Millberg Weiss law firm, for arranging millions in kickbacks to people recruited as plaintiffs in more than 150 class action suits against U.S. companies. They were sentenced to prison terms, and the firm agreed to pay a \$75 million penalty to the Department of Justice.

For the first time in our nation's history, biological terror was sent through the mail in 2001, when four anthrax-laden letters resulted in the deaths of two postal employees and three citizens. In related incidents, Postal Inspectors responded to more than 20,000 suspicious mailings, anthrax hoaxes, and threats. A suspect was identified but committed suicide before charges were brought.

Publication 162

February 2009

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For more information about the
U.S. Postal Inspection Service,
call toll-free 1-877-876-2455 (option 5),
or visit our Web site at
<http://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/>.

PSN 7610-05-000-5085



*The mission of the
United States Postal Inspection Service
is to protect the U.S. Postal Service, secure
the nation's mail system, and ensure public
trust in the U.S. Mail.*