

## Recruiter for immigrants faces 86 charges

RCMP allege that fictitious job offers were created for foreign workers

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The RCMP has laid 86 charges against a Toronto employment recruiter who is accused of inventing fictitious jobs to help prospective immigrants come to Canada. Peter Bloom, 35, is charged with 43 counts of uttering forged documents and 43 counts of misrepresentation in a case that immigration lawyers say underscores the potential for abuse in the foreign-worker program.

"We allege he took it upon himself to make up fictitious job offers on behalf of legitimate individuals looking to immigrate to Canada," RCMP Sergeant Mike Scott said. "There are all kinds of frauds, but this is the first time we have investigated this type of misrepresentation and we view it as very serious."

Mr. Bloom worked for the Canada Job Network, a private organization in Toronto, that for a fee, matches foreigners with job offers and helps them accrue 15 of the 67 points they need to be accepted as immigrants.

Police allege Mr. Bloom received \$70,000 from the Canada Job Network in commission from June of 2003 to January, 2004, for creating what turned out to be fake white-collar positions, such as bookkeepers, and phony blue-collar jobs, such as mechanics.

It is unclear how many immigrants were accepted to Canada on the basis of these phony job offers. Citizenship and Immigration Canada is still working to track down all the files.

"We're evaluating the cases to determine how many visas, if any, were issued in connection with this case and then we'll take appropriate enforcement action. The applicants could be removed," said Maria Iadonardi, a Citizenship and Immigration spokeswoman.

"But it's also possible they could have been admitted anyway even without an offer of employment."

There is no evidence that either Canada Job Network or the prospective immigrants -- who came from India, Eastern Europe and other parts of the world - - knew the job offers were false, police said.

The RCMP is continuing to investigate lawyers and other immigration consultancy firms in the Greater Toronto Area that help prospective immigrants come to Canada.

David Rosenblatt, a lawyer who is affiliated with the Canada Job Network, noted that Mr. Bloom was dismissed in January, 2004.

"We did an audit and found a problem and we went to Human Resources Skills Development Canada, which administers the foreign-worker program with CIC," Mr. Rosenblatt said.

"We have been co-operating with police."

Sergio Karas, an immigration lawyer, said the problem with the foreign-worker program is it can take two or more years to process a landed-immigrant application.

"What employer in good faith would really hire a job seeker they have never met who might take up to three years to immigrate to Canada?" he asked.

"We have seen an increasing number of ads, particularly in the ethnic press, promising arranged employment in Canada and guaranteeing immigration to Canada. This is an ill-conceived add-on to the point system that should be re-examined by CIC because it lends itself to cheating," Mr. Karas said.

Ms. Iadinaridi said Citizenship and Immigration is aware that people will continue to make attempts to falsify information to make a profit from people who genuinely want to come to Canada. "We are extra vigilant," she said.