

FREMONT WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY IN IMMIGRATION FRAUD SCHEME

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Body

A **Fremont woman pleaded guilty** to conspiracy Thursday in an **immigration fraud scheme** that produced between 300 and 1,200 phony applications for legal status, federal prosecutors said.

Emma Rosella D' Fiandra charged as much as \$15,000 to create bogus documents for immigrants seeking amnesty between 1987 and 1991, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Gruel. A 1986 federal law allowed illegal immigrants to seek amnesty, the first step toward legal residency, if they had entered the United States illegally before 1982 and remained in the country since then.

Gruel said D' Fiandra took elaborate measures to create the appearance that a recent immigrant had entered before 1982. She created receipts for phantom jobs, fabricated income tax returns and used a microwave to make documents look older, he said.

Federal agents who searched her **Fremont** home in 1991 found 56 counterfeit postal cancellation stamps from foreign countries, used to back-date letters, as well as blank birth certificates, Gruel said. He said D' Fiandra also held classes for 30 to 40 illegal entrants at a time, coaching them on the stories they would tell **immigration** officials.

D' Fiandra fled after the search and was arrested two years later in Florida, Gruel said.

The U.S. **Immigration** and Naturalization Service has identified at least 300 people who used D' Fiandra's documents to apply for amnesty, Gruel said. He said they would be placed in deportation proceedings. D' Fiandra once told an undercover agent she was responsible for 1,200 amnesty applications, the prosecutor said.

D' Fiandra, 50, a native of Peru, entered the United States as a visitor in 1978, overstayed her visa and later filed her own fake amnesty application, Gruel said. He said she faced deportation after completion of her prison sentence.

Besides conspiracy, D' Fiandra **pleaded guilty** to two counts of furnishing counterfeit green cards and Social Security cards. She is to be sentenced April 7 by U.S. District Judge Charles Legge and faces a term of 15 to 24 months under federal guidelines, Gruel said.

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