

EX-LAWYER BUSTED IN IMMIGRATION SCAM

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Byline: By YING CHAN

Body

A former **lawyer** was arrested yesterday on charges of running a firm that turned out phony **immigration** papers for hundreds of clients, sometimes holding sessions to make up tales of political persecution, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Immigration sources close to the two-year investigation that bagged Paul Freedman said thousands of immigrants may have paid him millions in legal fees for the phony claims.

Freedman was finally arrested after the INS sent two investigators posing as immigrants to his offices seeking work permits. The **lawyer** allegedly used an INS loophole to get a work permit by filing political asylum applications.

"It's a major enterprise," said Demetrios Georgakopoulos, assistant district director for the New York **Immigration** and Naturalization Service. "He was taking advantage of the system because until this year, the mere filing of an application resulted in a work permit. It's no longer true."

Under new rules, asylum applicants are no longer given automatic work permits.

Many of Freedman's former clients could face deportation as the INS moves to revoke resident papers obtained through faked applications.

"Even [the green cards that] have been approved, they could be revoked," said Georgakopoulos.

Freedman, who denied the charges yesterday, was arrested by **immigration** agents at his Woodmere, L.I., home.

Authorities said the 38-year-old graduate of Yeshiva University and its law school ran his **scams** from at least August 1988 to this March, when he was disbarred by the Appellate Division.

Some clients who never got results from Freedman and have been hunting for him to get their money back were glad to hear about his arrest.

"I love it. He deserves it," said Emma Toro, whose sister gave Freedman \$ 3,000 for her son's deportation case. "He did a lot of damage. I hope they take him away and throw away the key."

Freedman, who was charged with one count of **immigration** fraud, faces up to five years in jail and a \$ 250,000 fine.

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