

Md. Man Accused Of Document Fraud; Cook Arrested in Sting, Police Say

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Body

A **cook** at a naval facility in West Bethesda was **arrested** this month for allegedly selling a fake Social Security card and an immigration **document** to a **police** officer posing as an undocumented Panamanian.

Montgomery County **police** charged Wenceslao Ramos-Andrade, 31, of Hyattsville, with sale of a false identification card, possession of fraudulent government **documents** and forgery of a public **document**. All the charges are misdemeanors.

Fake **documents** for immigrants have long been a problem, **said** a **police** spokesman, Lt. Eric Burnett.

"Unfortunately, the technology has gotten so much better in this country that it has become more difficult to determine which **documents** are real," Burnett **said**.

Ramos-Andrade was **arrested** Dec. 21 and released that day on \$10,000 bail, **police said**. Attempts to reach Ramos-Andrade, who was a civilian worker at the Carderock division of the Naval Surface Warfare Center, were unsuccessful.

The **arrest** came after a joint investigation by detectives from the Montgomery **police fraud** section and investigators at the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Investigators set up a **sting** after learning that Ramos-Andrade sold fake **documents** to unauthorized immigrants, according to a statement of probable cause filed as part of his **arrest**. The **document** gives this outline of the case:

On Nov. 29, a **police** officer from Naval District Washington called Ramos-Andrade, identified himself under an assumed name, Israel Martinez, and asked about buying fake **documents**.

Ramos-Andrade offered to sell him a Social Security card and a resident alien card for \$300. They agreed to meet the next day in the parking lot of White Flint Mall. When the **men** met, the price for the **documents** dropped to \$247. The officer gave Ramos-Andrade the cash and two passport-size photographs. Ramos-Andrade **said** the **documents** would be ready in three days.

The officer asked Ramos-Andrade whether the **documents** could be used to open a bank account. Ramos-Andrade **said** yes.

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Federal agents photographed the meeting and trailed Ramos-Andrade to two addresses in Hyattsville. On Dec. 3 agents gathered at White Flint Mall, this time in front of a Dave and Buster's restaurant. Ramos-Andrade handed the officer a small envelope with the documents. The officer told Ramos-Andrade he had nine additional prospective clients.

Ramos-Andrade showed the officer a resident alien card with Ramos-Andrade's photo and said that type of fake document, which cost \$450, is so reliable "that if the barcode on one of those resident alien cards is scanned it will come up with correct information," according to the charging document. Some resident alien cards, which in the past didn't have bar codes, have been enhanced recently to foil counterfeiters.

The officer told Ramos-Andrade that he knew a couple of Arab men who wanted U.S. passports. Ramos-Andrade told him he could get the passports, along with driver's licenses, but would need more time, the document says.

Law enforcement officials have focused more on fake identification documents since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Burnett said.

"I'm not saying that every person who is illegal is a criminal," he said, "but there are those who are trying to get their documents with a criminal intent in mind."

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