

Sign In | Register Now

boston.com

Local Search Site Search

HOME TODAY'S GLOBE NEWS BUSINESS SPORTS LIFESTYLE A&E THINGS TO DO TR

Local National World Campaign '08 Business Education Health Science Green Obituaries

HOME / NEWS / LOCAL

Ex-owner admits he hired, harbored illegal immigrants

The Boston Globe

New Bedford firm was raided in '07

By Brian R. Ballou
Globe Staff / November 4, 2008

Email | Print | Single Page | Yahoo! Buzz | ShareThis Text size - +

The former owner of a New Bedford leather goods company pleaded guilty yesterday to charges he hired and harbored illegal immigrants, capping a lengthy investigation by federal authorities who stormed the factory in early 2007, detaining most of the employees.

Francesco Insolita, 51, of Pembroke, accepted a prison term of 12 to 18 months and a fine of \$30,000.



Discuss
COMMENTS (2)

The company, Michael Bianco Inc., will have to pay nearly \$2 million in fines and restitution for the overtime owed to workers. Insolita pleaded guilty to helping harbor and conceal illegal immigrants by allowing the company to submit false Social Security numbers to the government.

Attorneys for the company entered guilty pleas on 18 counts of knowingly hiring illegal immigrants between 2004 and 2006.

Speaking at his South Boston Office yesterday afternoon, US Attorney Michael J. Sullivan said, "Our nation is rich with opportunities, and it is no wonder that people from around the globe seek to come here to work and live. The defendants' conduct in this case undermines our nation's principles of freedom and the integrity of our immigration system, placing legally operating businesses at a competitive disadvantage."



INSIDE BOSTO

PEOPLE'S CHOICE



Celebrities, like D work the red carp

HARD DRIVE SURV



Hot gadgets from Consumer Electr

THE SEEN

Insolia's plea comes less than two weeks after two managers at the company pleaded guilty.

Dilia Costa, 56, the company's production manager, pleaded guilty to hiring and harboring illegal aliens, and Gloria Melo, 42, pleaded guilty to continuing to employ illegal workers after the company had reason to know they were illegal.

Both women will probably face probation and small fines at their sentencing in January. Insolia is also scheduled to be sentenced in January.

Dozens of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents stormed the Michael Bianco factory on March 6, 2007, detaining at least 361 illegal immigrants.

In the days following, federal authorities drew sharp criticism for the raid and its aftermath. Some of the detainees complained of poor conditions at detention facilities and of coercion to sign deportation documents. Some family members of those detained complained that the children of the detainees were left without their primary caregivers.

Bruce Foucart, special agent in charge of Boston's ICE office, yesterday called the allegations of mistreatment outrageous. "All of those allegations were false," he said.

In a phone interview, Onding Sniffen, a Catholic Social Services attorney from Fall River who represents at least a dozen of the detainees, said of Insolia: "This may be coming to an end for Mr. Insolia, but for my clients, this nightmare is far from over."

She said of approximately 18 clients, three have been deported and four have found "some form of relief, in a new visa or other special immigration status."

ICE officials said yesterday that 116 cases are pending before immigration court, 168 workers were deported, 26 have received final orders for deportation, and 16 have had their legal status adjusted allowing them to remain in the United States.

Michael Bianco Inc. made military backpacks and other equipment for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The company was sold last year to Eagle Industries of Fenton, Mo. ■

© Copyright 2008 Globe Newspaper Company.

READER COMMENTS (2) Post a comment



Best of Bill Bret Photos around t

INK TANK



A roundup of ec

PLUS...

Blogs Games
Puzzles Persc
listings Class
Magazine

Do know Credi
Excell 750
Good 660
Fair 620
Poor 360
???
Fin

~~ALL the illegals should have been deported and Insolia should have been fined much more and given a much longer prison sentence. This is a travesty.~~

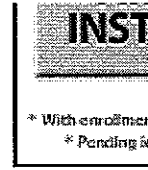
Your e-mail address (for return address purposes)
 by JUSTICE and on November 05 1:50 AM
 Report Abuse

E-mail address of recipients (Separate multiple addresses with commas)
 by alibaba2008nights November 04 12:27 AM
 Report Abuse

Send

DISCLAIMER: Boston.com does not share this information or keep it permanently, as it is for the sole purpose of sending this one time e-mail.

VIEW ALL READER COMMENTS (2) >
 Name and both e-mail fields are required.



Email	Print	Single page	Reprints	Share

Ads by Google

what's this?

Immigration Agents Needed

Criminal Justice degree needed. Get educated Take advantage. universitystart.com/cjustice

Free Immigration Help

Call 866-630-3604 Right Now. Get Free Expert Advice You Need! ImmigrationSpecialistHelpline.com

Immigrants & Diseases

8 Diseases that are being brought into the U.S. By Illegal Immigrants www.douglasreport.com

[Home](#) | [Today's Globe](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [A&E](#) | [Things to Do](#) | [Travel](#) | [Car](#)

[CONTACT BOSTON.COM](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work here](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS feeds](#)

[CONTACT THE BOSTON GLOBE](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#) | [Advertise](#) | [The Boston Globe Extras](#) | [T](#)
