



EMAIL BULLETIN

FOREIGN NATIONALS EXPERIENCE THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF INTERAGENCY DATA SHARING AND INTEGRATION OF COMPUTER SYSTEMS

14 January 04

As reported in previous Tindall & Foster Email Bulletins, in the years following the September 11th attacks on the United States, various state, local and federal authorities have received federal funds to dramatically increase their data sharing capabilities. Computer systems and databases have been upgraded, and will continue to be upgraded, to rapidly share information throughout all levels of law enforcement agencies.

In the months since greater inter-agency cooperation began, more and more foreign nationals have experienced the practical consequences of the efforts of law enforcement to share information and coordinate various law enforcement activities. As an example, during a routine traffic stop involving local police, an individual who overstayed a B visitor visa was recently taken into custody and turned over to Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE). The local police officer was able to determine from the police cruiser's computer terminal the precise date on which the individual's B-2 visitor status expired. Within hours, the individual was in jail awaiting initiation of formal removal proceedings.

This "real-life" example demonstrates that all visitors to the United States should take care to comply with all U.S. immigration laws and make a timely departure from the United States. If an individual is unable to make a timely departure, he or she should contact his or her Tindall & Foster immigration attorney to initiate procedures for extending lawful nonimmigrant status in the United States. Upon filing for an extension, the individual should carry evidence of the filing as well as his or her attorney's business card at all times in case the need to demonstrate lawful status should arise, including routine traffic stops.