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## After Raid, Federal Charges for Ex-C.E.O. at Meatpacker

By [JULIA PRESTON](#)

Federal [immigration](#) agents on Thursday arrested the former chief executive of [Agriprocessors Inc.](#), the nation's biggest kosher meatpacking company, accusing him of harboring illegal immigrants at a plant in Postville, [Iowa](#), where about 400 immigrant workers were arrested in a raid in May.

With the arrest of the former chief executive, Sholom Rubashkin, federal authorities extended their criminal prosecution to the highest level of management at the plant. Some 300 workers, mainly immigrants from Guatemala, were convicted of felony document fraud charges after the raid, and Iowa prosecutors had faced mounting criticism for punishing those workers but not Agriprocessors's executives and owners.

Mr. Rubashkin is the highest-ranking executive to face arrest in stepped-up immigration raids at packinghouses nationwide since late 2006.

The son of Aaron Rubashkin, the owner of the family-held company, Sholom Rubashkin had been the top manager of the kosher plant since 1987. He was forced by his father to step down as chief executive shortly after the raid.

Mr. Rubashkin was arrested Thursday by immigration agents at his home in Postville, prosecutors said, and was released on \$1 million bail after a hearing.

He is also accused, in a criminal complaint unsealed Thursday, of abetting aggravated identity theft, which carries a mandatory two-year minimum sentence. Many of the immigrant workers were charged with that crime.

Mr. Rubashkin and his father, both Lubavitch Hasidic Jews, built Agriprocessors into a kosher giant. Kosher consumers faced meat shortages since the raid, and the scandal fueled a debate about kosher ethics.

According to the complaint, Mr. Rubashkin participated directly in efforts in the days before the raid to obtain fraudulent documents that could pass immigration agents' scrutiny for dozens of illegal immigrants working in Postville.

The complaint suggests that plant managers had heard a raid was coming and had initially informed many workers they would have to present valid identity documents or be fired. But two floor supervisors told investigators that they met with Mr. Rubashkin at the plant to request a \$4,500 loan to "help the employees who were to be terminated." On May 9, Mr. Rubashkin agreed to give them the cash loan.

One supervisor said he had lent \$200 each to about a dozen workers, who paid a line foreman to buy fake documents, the complaint says.

On May 11, the complaint charges, human resources managers worked all day under Mr. Rubashkin's supervision to fill out job applications for workers with new fake documents.

One human resources manager told investigators that she had protested to Mr. Rubashkin that employees who had been scheduled for termination were applying under new names. Mr. Rubashkin said "the IDs looked good to him" and told her to accept them, the complaint says.

While the complaint names no employees, two supervisors, Juan Carlos Guerrero Espinoza and Martin de la Rosa, have pleaded guilty to harboring charges. A human resources manager, Laura Althouse, pleaded guilty on Wednesday.

Mr. Rubashkin and his father also face state charges for [child labor](#) violations. And Iowa labor authorities on Wednesday levied \$10 million in fines against the company for wage violations.

Mr. Rubashkin faces a maximum of 22 years in prison if convicted on the federal charges.

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