UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Table of Contents

4    WHO WE ARE
6    MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF
8    MEET OUR LEADERS
10   FIGHTING MAIL FRAUD
12   PROTECTING POSTAL CUSTOMERS
14   ASSISTING CRIME VICTIMS
16   ADMINISTERING ASSET FORFEITURE
18   TARGETING THEFT
20   INTERCEPTING DANGEROUS MAIL
22   IMPEDING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING
24   HALTING CHILD EXPLOITATION
26   KEEPING EMPLOYEES SAFE & SECURE
28   DEPLOYING SECURITY
30   SAFEGUARDING REVENUE & ASSETS
32   WORKING GLOBALLY
34   FORENSIC EXAMINATION
36   PREPARING OUR WORKFORCE
38   CONNECTING WITH CUSTOMERS
41   INVESTIGATIVE STATISTICS
The U.S. Postal Service backs its mail service with the protection of its own federal law enforcement agency—the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. We are the primary law enforcement, crime prevention, and security arm of the Postal Service. We provide the investigative and security resources that ensure America’s confidence in the U.S. Mail. It’s our mission: support and protect the Postal Service and its employees, infrastructure and customers; enforce the laws that defend the nation’s mail system from illegal or dangerous use; and ensure public trust in the mail.

We work to assure that American businesses can safely dispatch funds, securities, and information through the mail; that postal customers can entrust their correspondence to the mail; and that postal employees can work in a safe environment.

Our Postal Inspectors are federal law enforcement officers who carry firearms, make arrests, execute federal search warrants, and serve subpoenas. The 1,280 Inspectors enforce roughly 200 federal laws covering crimes that include fraudulent use of the U.S. Mail and the postal system. Our Security Force of armed, uniformed Postal Police Officers, numbering 597, is assigned to protect critical postal facilities. Our national information technology infrastructure supports users at nearly 200 sites nationwide, and our offices are linked nationally via a private law enforcement network.

An additional 581 technical and administrative professionals support the effort nationwide and at the National Forensic Laboratory. There, a state-of-the-art facility is staffed by highly trained forensic scientists and technical specialists who play a key role in identifying, apprehending, prosecuting, and convicting individuals responsible for postal-related criminal offenses. They provide scientific and technical expertise to the criminal and security investigations of the Postal Inspection Service.

Our Postal Inspectors investigate postal-related crimes, such as identity theft, mail bombs, postal robberies and burglaries. And they protect against the use of the mail to launder drug money, defraud customers, traffic in illegal drugs and exploit children.

The security part of the mission means ensuring postal employees, customers, and some 32,000 postal facilities are safe from criminal attack. Whether dealing with mail thieves in colonial times, stagecoach robbers in the 1800s, gangsters in the 1930s, the Unabomber in the 1980s and ’90s, or anthrax mailings in this century—Postal Inspectors are there.

If it has anything to do with preserving the safety, security and integrity of the nation’s mail system from criminal misuse, we do it. And we’ve been doing it successfully since our inception 242 years ago, on August 7, 1775.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Benjamin Franklin, who we in the Postal Inspection Service look at as our founder, was fond of saying there are only two constants in life: Death and Taxes. I offer one addition: Change. 2017 was a year of change and challenges for the Postal Service. Despite the many changes to the Postal Service since its inception, there is another constant held by its customers: Americans have the right to mail and receive letters and packages with every expectation that no one will tamper with or steal their mail. The American public trusts the Postal Inspection Service to deliver on that expectation and keep the mail safe. As the Postal Service has changed, our focus has evolved throughout the years, yet the core of our mission has remained the same: protect the U.S. Postal Service, its employees and customers, and enforce the laws that defend the nation’s mail system from illegal or dangerous use.

For any organization to remain relevant and vibrant, it must become adept at embracing change, adapting to innovation, and overcoming obstacles. We’ve done just that through the years. 2017 posed some unique challenges and brought a new word to go with change: flexibility. Newly-conceived jump teams were created to respond to natural disasters, cybercrime, and the nation’s opioid epidemic. After the massive hurricanes that devastated the Houston area, the Southeast, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, Inspection Service personnel responded and were key players in the recovery efforts. We have taken care of our own in the postal family and continue to do great work in helping the Postal Service restore delivery operations in the impacted areas.

The dramatic rise in the illegal use and dissemination of prescription and non-prescription opioid drugs has reached epidemic proportions. Although we have seen significant improvements in our ability to seize fentanyl and synthetic opioids from the U.S. Mail, the increasing volume of prohibited substances being mailed made it necessary to deploy additional resources to focus on this problem. We are piloting unique and aggressive investigative, security and preventive solutions nationwide to combat the fast-growing problem of illegal drugs and contraband entering the United States through the mail.

To protect the Postal Service’s vast computer network and consumers from cybercrime, we are leveraging technology, maximizing the effectiveness of automation, and utilizing intelligence in our efforts.

Remaining vigilant and protecting our postal employees remains our top priority. Proactive and prevention-oriented, Postal Inspectors concluded an initiative that included visiting postal facilities and making 4,600 presentations to more than 168,000 employees on steps to take in an active shooter situation. Reactively, Inspectors and Postal Police responded to 1,518 incidents of violent crimes, making 78 arrests for robberies, 79 burglary arrests, and arresting 259 individuals for assaults and threats on postal employees.

An article in the June 5, 1887, edition of the Chicago Tribune reported that one of the duties of Post Office Inspectors was to ensure that “Frauds and humbugs . . . shall not swindle the public through the mails.” There are still humbugs out there who want to steal mail from your mailbox and other humbugs who want to send scams to your mailbox. As Postal Inspectors, we investigate these crimes and arrest these humbugs. Our enforcement efforts last year resulted in 5,363 arrests and 4,661 convictions related to the investigation of postal crimes. Inspectors also seized mailpieces containing more than 40,000 pounds of illegal narcotics and $22.5 million in drug-trafficking proceeds.

When prohibited or dangerous mailings or explosive devices are discovered, specially trained and equipped Postal Inspectors respond. This year, 2,282 incidents required responses to identify hazardous substances and suspicious items. Our mail screenings added a layer of protection at eight national mail-screening events, including the Super Bowl. Operating our 53-foot, mobile mail-screening trailer, customized to detect chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive threats in the mail, Inspectors and other specialists screened more than 39,000 mail pieces. No harmful mailpieces were detected.

Our expert forensic staff counted many successes in the past year playing a key role in identifying, apprehending, prosecuting and convicting individuals responsible for postal-related criminal offenses. They provide scientific and technical expertise to the criminal and security investigations of the Postal Inspection Service.

Protecting and enforcing are two key pillars of our Strategic Plan. Preventing is the third. We’ve found that educating people about scams and other crimes is the best way to prevent them from becoming victims. We completed a 5-year initiative — the Consumer Alert News Network — that reached 77 percent of the nation’s viewing audience with fraud awareness messages. Another fraud message reaches more than a million viewers each week through “The Inspectors,” a half-hour, Emmy Award-winning show airing on Saturday mornings on the CBS network. We fund these projects with fines collected from criminals convicted in fraudulent schemes. We have also partnered with AARP on “Operation Protect Veterans,” a national campaign to warn those who have served in the military about scams and fraud schemes that target veterans. Our goal in all these campaigns is simple: help prevent consumers from being victimized and preserve their financial well-being.

We strive to offer the best-protected mail system in the world. For that, I thank our dedicated employees, whose work ensures America’s trust in the U.S. Mail.
Meet Our Leaders

The Executive Committee of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service considers and sets the organizational direction of the agency, focusing on all matters encompassing strategic planning, policy, development, investment and risk programs, workplace issues, and succession planning. The members serve as a liaison to the U.S. Postal Service’s leadership team and other law enforcement and investigative agencies. Committee members include the Chief Postal Inspector, the Deputy Chief Inspectors, the Inspector in Charge of the Office of Counsel, and the Director of Business Operations.
U.S. Postal Inspectors investigate crimes in which the U.S. Mail is used to further a scheme—whether the scheme originated in the mail, by telephone, or on the Internet. The use of the U.S. Mail to defraud another of money or property constitutes mail fraud.

The mail fraud statute, the nation’s oldest consumer protection law, was first enacted in 1872 to prohibit illicit mailings for the purpose of executing a fraudulent scheme. Postal Inspectors vigorously pursue mail fraud in all its forms, whether familiar scams such as Ponzi schemes or newer frauds that blend the use of the Internet, telemarketing and the mail. It is still our best defense against criminals who conduct fraudulent schemes via the mail.

Any item sent through the U.S. Mail must also comply with the Deceptive Mail Prevention and Enforcement Act. This statute prohibits the mailing of certain deceptive mailings relating to fake sweepstakes, skill contests, and facsimile checks and provides civil penalties for such. Under this law, Postal Inspectors examine questionable promotions and review complaints from postal customers about potentially fraudulent mailings. It also grants the Postal Service subpoena powers to obtain records and authorizes administrative hearings to determine the legality of mailings suspected of violating the law.

INTERNET SWEETHEART THIEF TAKEN OFFLINE
Postal Inspector Adam Latham
Chicago Division

Okayi Ilima Sunnoma, a Nigerian national who lived in South Africa, orchestrated an elaborate “romance” scam for over six years. Sunnoma approached middle-aged women on Internet dating websites and led them to believe they had a legitimate romantic relationship. Eventually, Sunnoma conned the women into sending money or reshipping merchandise bought with fraudulent credit cards to him in South Africa. One hundred thirty-four women were victims of Sunnoma’s scheme. At least three women were forced into bankruptcy.

Postal Inspectors, Secret Service, and Homeland Security agents tabulated over $1.7 million in losses to the female victims and merchants from Sunnoma’s romance scam. In August 2014, Metropolitan London police arrested Sunnoma as he was about to board a flight to Johannesburg. Sunnoma was extradited to the U.S. to face trial. Thousands of chat sessions and e-mails were translated from Nigerian pidgin to English, which showed Sunnoma was the leader and organizer of the scam. After two days of testimony from a dozen victims and witnesses at his March 2016 trial in Illinois, Sunnoma changed his plea to guilty to all eight counts of his indictment. At the February 2017 sentencing, the judge said the crimes Sunnoma committed were the most devious he had dealt with short of laying hands on his victims. Based on his pattern of extort, violent threats, and “extreme psychological injury” to his victims, Sunnoma was sentenced to 27 years in federal prison and ordered to make restitution to his female victims and the defrauded merchants. After his release, Sunnoma will be deported. The South African government seized four of Sunnoma’s residences, liquidated his assets, and sent the proceeds to the U.S. for restitution. As a result, female victims recovered about 30 percent of their losses.

TAKEN OFFLINE
Bateses were indicted by a Tennessee grand jury in August 2015 on 44 counts and “extreme psychological injury” to his victims, Sunnoma was sentenced to 27 years in federal prison and ordered to make restitution to his female victims and the defrauded merchants. After his release, Sunnoma will be deported. The South African government seized four of Sunnoma’s residences, liquidated his assets, and sent the proceeds to the U.S. for restitution. As a result, female victims recovered about 30 percent of their losses.

PHONY MORTGAGE RESCUE SCHEME FORECLOSED
Postal Inspector Rocio Gonzalez
Los Angeles Division

For several years, homeowners facing foreclosure throughout the country received mail solicitations promising guaranteed approval in a government-sponsored program for struggling homeowners. The so-called “mortgage modification professionals” did business under the names “Equity Restoration,” “Home Preservation Services” and “Home Retention Center.” The victim homeowners were told their lender required a “reinstatement fee” of thousands of dollars. Victims were also told to make several “trial” payments. Victims mailed their money to fake companies in and around Los Angeles, CA. None of the “fees” or “payments” were ever paid to the victims’ mortgage holders. The mastermind of the scheme, Sammy Araya, and his cohort, Michael Henderson, diverted the funds solely for themselves and co-conspirators. Over 1,000 victims lost over $10 million to the scammers. Many victims, who thought their mortgages were modified, instead lost their homes altogether. The Inspection Service provided some with letters for their creditors indicating they were fraud victims. After a two-week trial, Araya, Henderson, and the owner of the mailing service, Jen Seko, were convicted of mail fraud, wire fraud, and conspiracy. In July 2017, Araya and Henderson received 20-year and 19-year prison sentences, respectively; Seko was sentenced to seven years in prison. Nine other co-conspirators in California and Nevada received sentences from five to 18 years in prison.
An important element of the Postal Inspection Service’s crime prevention efforts is informing and educating consumers about fraud schemes involving the mail. Inspectors have found that educating people about crimes is the best way to prevent them from becoming victims. Armed with the right knowledge, almost anyone can recognize a fraudulent scheme and make the right decision—to stay away.

In FY 2017 Postal Inspectors completed a five-year initiative—the Consumer Alert News Network—that reached 77 percent of the nation’s viewing audience with fraud awareness messages. Another fraud message reaches more than a million viewers each week through “The Inspectors,” a half-hour, Emmy Award-winning show airing on Saturday mornings on the CBS network. Towards the end of the reporting period, the Inspection Service embarked on a new crime prevention initiative with the AARP—“Operation Protect Veterans.” This national campaign focuses on making veterans aware of frauds that target them. These projects are funded through forfeitures and fines collected from criminals convicted of postal crimes.

PROTECT • PREVENT • ENFORCE • PREPARE

The Postal Inspection Service’s Cybercrime unit is responsible for providing investigative, forensic, and analytical support to Inspection Service field divisions and the USPS Corporate Information Security Office. Our unit helps safeguard the Postal Service’s network infrastructure to ensure daily operations are uninterrupted and cyberattacks are mitigated so postal customers can do business with the Postal Service online with confidence. Our Inspectors aggressively investigate security incidents and criminal activities affecting the USPS computer network, USPS E-Commerce products and services, and field investigations related to the dark web and cryptocurrencies.
Assisting Crime Victims

The impact of fraud and financial crimes on victims can be devastating. Victims are often underserved, due to underreporting and the complexities of investigations and prosecutions. Victims of financial crimes seldom are made whole.

To help them find their way in the criminal justice system, the Inspection Service works with victims of mail-related crime by advising them of their rights and the services available to them. Inspection Service staff regularly contacts victims, offering support and guidance.

With this outreach, victims feel more comfortable in an unfamiliar system. This support also has a significant impact on the confidence of victims in the criminal justice system.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS’ RIGHTS WEEK

The Inspection Service again participated in the National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW) in April 2017. General analysts helped distribute NCVRW materials to all divisions. Post Offices displayed NCVRW posters and offered educational literature to millions of its customers. Inspectors and general analysts organized informational meetings, participated in NCVRW community events, and visited local Post Offices and community centers around the country to raise awareness of NCVRW. This year’s theme was “Strength. Resilience. Justice.”

OUTSTANDING VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE

Washington Division General Analyst Weiling Zhu was recognized with the 2017 Victim Witness Assistance Program Award for her work in an ongoing investigation involving approximately 250 elderly fraud victims and a potential loss of over one million dollars. Zhu helped navigate victims through the criminal justice system by providing support, assessing victims’ needs, and developing a questionnaire specific to the targeted victims. She also connected victims to existing resources and ensured caregivers received information about elder abuse and the trauma these victims experience. Zhu has handled numerous phone calls for clarification and assistance. Each call, regardless of the redundancy, was handled with compassion and patience with the elderly victims. Zhu ensures that elder abuse victims are treated with respect and know their rights and their role within the criminal justice system.
Administering Asset Forfeiture

Protecting the Postal Service and Its Customers

Illegal drug trafficking in the mail not only endangers employees, but tarnishes the integrity of the Postal Service brand. Asset forfeiture remains the nation’s most-used weapon in the war on drugs.

This past fiscal year, Postal Inspectors seized 2,069 assets valued at $221.8 million. Eighty-eight percent of these seizures involved illegal narcotics and related proceeds. In our efforts to reduce drugs in the mail, we leverage our resources and intelligence gathering by working with our federal and state law enforcement partners.

The forfeiture program allows for the equitable sharing of seized proceeds to help offset the cost of law enforcement in appreciation of their investigative support. We made 2,778 sharing payments to our partners totaling $11.6 million this past year.

Funding Investigations and Education

Forfeiture funds continue to support a number of investigative and educational initiatives valuable to our agency’s mission. Initiatives such as Project JOLT (Jamaican Operations Linked to Telemarketing) and the Cross-Border Task Forces with Canada make us more effective in protecting U.S. citizens from criminals preying upon them from beyond our borders.

The Inspection Service used forfeiture funds to initiate a number of consumer protection campaigns on the Internet, the news media and television. Forfeiture funding provided state-of-the-art law enforcement training programs at little or no cost to the Postal Service. In 2017, the Inspection Service partnered with the Department of Justice to conduct a financial crimes and forfeiture seminar for newly assigned agents and analysts.

Most notably, forfeiture supports our agency’s ability to utilize new strategies for both deterrence of narcotics trafficking and enforcement of criminal statutes against those using the U.S. Mail to distribute drugs. It provides us with the “edge” to stay one step ahead of the criminal element.

Western Union Admits Wrong-Doing, Forfeits $586 Million

After a nationwide multi-agency investigation led by the Postal Inspection Service, Western Union agreed to forfeit $586 million in January 2017 and entered into a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice. In its agreement, Western Union admitted to criminal violations including willfully failing to maintain an effective anti-money laundering program and aiding and abetting wire fraud. Western Union agreed to implement systemic changes and processes to provide corrective action against agents who had willful, repeated lapses in compliance. The company also agreed to ensure that we get word of suspicious or illegal activity by its agents. This was the second time the Postal Inspection Service exposed the practices of a worldwide money transfer business.

MoneyGram International entered into a deferred prosecution agreement with the US Department of Justice in 2012 after a lengthy Inspection Service investigation.

If These Walls Could Talk...

A raid by the Miami-Dade County (FL) Police Narcotics Bureau uncovered $24 million in cash, sealed in buckets and concealed in walls, as part of an ongoing Postal Inspection Service investigation. The U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida ordered the cash be made part of the federal case against the two suspects. U.S. Marshals are prohibited from accepting seized cash, so the Inspection Service coordinated a logistics plan to move the cash from the Miami-Dade Police to the Treasury Seized Currency Collection Network (SCCN), where it could be counted, deposited, and electronically transferred to the Marshals. The plan called for a secured convoy complete with air support and an armored vehicle to move the cash to the designated location. The move went off without incident, thanks to the Inspection Service’s careful planning.
The U.S. Postal Service delivers to every home and business in the country, delivering over 154 billion pieces of mail annually to 155 million addresses nationwide. While the vast majority of the mail delivered arrives intact, there are thieves that persist in their efforts to steal it. Postal Inspectors aggressively investigate these thefts.

But enforcement is not the only approach to mail theft. Postal Inspectors across the country work hard to protect the mail and make it difficult for mail thieves to be successful. The Postal Inspection Service reviews, tracks, and refers mail theft complaints to Postal Inspectors through our Mail Theft Analytics Program (MTAP). These complaints are filed online, through U.S. Postal Service call centers, and directly with Postal Inspection Service field offices. Reports of potential mail theft losses from major mailers and the U.S. Postal Service’s National Change of Address database also assist Postal Inspectors in identifying mail theft trends, enhancing current investigations, and jacketing new cases.

The Postal Inspection Service was contacted in August 2015 by the Lexington County (SC) Sheriff’s Department about recent mail theft complaints from local residents. Brian Crumpler was quickly contacted as a suspect. Inspectors further developed as a suspect. Inspectors contacted other law enforcement partners and bank fraud investigators in the Columbia, SC, area. Other agencies were familiar with the Inspection Service’s suspect. A neighboring county sheriff and four city police departments told us Crumpler and his co-conspirators were stealing mail and passing counterfeit checks in their jurisdictions. A number of banks provided surveillance video and other evidence of Crumpler’s activities to the Inspection Service.

On Christmas Day, 2015, a Richland County deputy sheriff came upon a vehicle with passengers acting suspiciously. When the deputy determined the license plates on the vehicle were stolen, the vehicle fled the scene but was eventually caught. Crumpler, the driver of the wayward vehicle, was arrested. The next day, a Postal Inspector served a search warrant on the impounded vehicle and recovered stolen mail from its trunk.

Crumpler and four co-conspirators were indicted on federal mail and identity theft charges. Based on the evidence gathered by the Inspection Service and what the other investigators shared, all five suspects pleaded guilty. In January 2017, Crumpler was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison. Postal Inspectors acquired evidence from several local police agencies and search warrants to build their case. Entz and Trichler used the unauthorized credit cards and bank accounts to purchase clothing, rent hotel rooms, and rent vehicles. Over 200 victims were affected, and over $109,000 was lost to Entz’s and Trichler’s scheme.

Postal Inspectors acquired evidence from the Inspection Service and the other investigators shared, all five suspects pleaded guilty. In January 2017, Crumpler was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison. Postal Inspectors acquired evidence from several local police agencies and search warrants to build their case. Entz and Trichler used the unauthorized credit cards and bank accounts to purchase clothing, rent hotel rooms, and rent vehicles. Over 200 victims were affected, and over $109,000 was lost to Entz’s and Trichler’s scheme.

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Postal Inspectors acquired evidence from several local police agencies and search warrants to build their case. Entz and Trichler were indicted by a federal grand jury on December 14, 2016, for their identity crimes and financial fraud and were found and arrested that evening. In April 2017, they each pleaded guilty to federal charges of aggravated identity theft and conspiracy to commit access device fraud. Entz was sentenced to 78 months’ imprisonment and three years’ supervised release. Trichler was sentenced to 60 months’ imprisonment and three years’ supervised release. They each must also make restitution.

On January 14, 2017, Postal Inspectors were conducting overnight surveillance when they saw a man and a woman “fishing” outgoing mail from Postal Service collection boxes outside a Fort Worth, TX, Post Office. When the two drove off, Postal Inspectors initiated a traffic stop. Instead, the suspects threw the mail out from inside the vehicle and fled in an effort to evade arrest. Inspectors pursued and contacted Fort Worth Police to join in the chase. The 45-minute pursuit ended after police deployed spikes to flatten the vehicle’s tires. Postal Inspectors and police retracted the 20 miles of their chase to recover what was discarded during the pursuit. They found fraudulent driver’s licenses, credit cards, re-encoded prepaid debit cards, computers, printers, check printing software, check stock, sheets of handwritten credit card numbers, and mail “fishing” equipment, including rat glue.

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Interception of Dangerous Mail

Specially trained and equipped Postal Inspectors respond when a prohibited mailing, suspicious substance, or the rare crime of an explosive device in the mail may cause harm. Inspectors responded to 2,282 incidents involving suspicious items, substances, powders or liquids in the mail or at postal facilities this past year.

In 2017, the Inspection Service worked with federal, state and local law enforcement partners to provide mail screening at eight national mail-screening events including our flagship event, Super Bowl 51 in Houston. Over 17,000 mail items were screened during these eight events.

In addition, the Postal Inspection Service delivered explosives training assistance in March 2017 to the Correos del Ecuador (Ecuador Postal Service). Our subject matter experts collaborated and developed a condensed version of our in-service training on handling improvised explosive devices and delivered the training to 24 Ecuadorian postal employees.

THREATS IN THE MAIL

During FY 2017, Postal Inspectors conducted over 35 high-profile investigations involving mail containing suspicious substances, along with threatening communications to federal and state government officials, religious organizations, foreign embassies, and news media. These investigations are a top priority. While testing proved the substances were non-hazardous, the correspondence in the mailings implied direct threats of bodily harm. These cases are prosecuted to the full extent of the law. During this past year, these investigations led to 18 suspects identified, resulting in 11 arrests.

AIR TRANSPORTATION REVIEWS (ATR)

The Postal Inspection Service performs air transportation reviews (ATR) to ensure mail security controls are in place and to prevent hazardous items from being carried. ATRs assess current procedures, internal and external controls, and security measures for mail transported by air. ATRs also show if USPS suppliers and contractors exercise due diligence in securing and protecting the mail entrusted to them, and if their employees are properly screened in accordance with contractual requirements.
In March 2016, Inspectors intercepted a parcel addressed to Justin Larson of Damascus, MD, that they suspected contained acetyl fentanyl. Inspectors obtained a search warrant for the parcel and found it contained 255 grams of acetyl fentanyl. Inspectors then performed a controlled delivery at Larson’s residence. Larson took possession of the parcel. A search warrant of his residence followed soon after. Inspectors found several parcels containing acetyl fentanyl inside Larson’s residence. Larson was charged with eight counts of possession with intent to distribute controlled substances and analogues, conspiracy, and negligent homicide. He was also sentenced to 30 years for each additional count (210 years total) to run consecutively.

**MULTI-STATE MARIJUANA, MONEY LAUNDERING RING DISRUPTED**
Postal Inspector Brian Witt
Houston Division

In January 2016, Inspectors intercepted a parcel bound for Louisville, KY, suspected to contain methamphetamine. A search warrant on the parcel confirmed our suspicions. Inspectors executed a controlled delivery of the parcel. Shortly thereafter, Dominic Stokes pulled up at the delivery address. A woman came out of the house and gave the parcel to Stokes. Stokes opened the parcel inside his vehicle and was arrested. Stokes admitted he was expecting three pounds of methamphetamine in the parcel. This was not Stokes’s first run-in with law enforcement. He had been arrested for drug trafficking in 2010. On June 20, 2017, Stokes pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine. On September 12, Stokes received a sentence of 110 months in federal prison, followed by five years’ supervised release.

In FY 2017, Postal Inspectors made 1,954 arrests involving drug trafficking, saw the conviction of 1,486 suspects, and seized 40,489 pounds of illegal narcotics and $22,487,980. In light of the nation’s opioid epidemic, the Postal Inspection Service is strengthening its efforts to identify mailings containing fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. We continue working with our law enforcement partners to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations that sell these deadly drugs. We have also added resources to enhance our analytical capabilities, so we can develop useful intelligence to share with our partners. Our mission in this effort remains clear: to protect postal employees and the U.S. Mail from these dangerous and illegal substances.

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Halting Child Exploitation

COLORADO SCIENTIST HELD IMAGES OF CHILDREN ON HIS COMPUTER
Postal Inspector Robert Barnett
Denver Division
Sean Coleman was identified through Operation Spade, an international police investigation into child pornography produced and marketed by a Toronto, Canada, film company. Coleman is a computer scientist with the National Institute of Standards and Technology. He was active as a scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts for many years and is a member of the “Order of the Arrow,” its national honor society. A search warrant was performed at Coleman’s Longmont, CO, residence in April 2013. Coleman admitted to a Postal Inspector he had ordered DVDs and video downloads from the Canadian company. An on-site examination of one of Coleman’s computers confirmed videos and images of child pornography. Coleman turned himself into Boulder County Police. In February 2017, he pleaded guilty to a state charge of sexual exploitation of a child. He received a four-year deferred sentence in April 2017, must undergo psychotherapy and monitoring of his computer, and was ordered to register as a sex offender.

MAN TRAVELS OUT OF STATE FOR CHILD SEX, WINDS UP IN PRISON
Postal Inspector Paul Suboyu
Pittsburgh Division
For seven months, David Lee Boesen, a registered sex offender from Hampton, VA, chatted online with an undercover investigator posing as a 14-year-old female in Ohio. During the conversations, Boesen sent naked pictures of himself and discussed his desires in graphic detail. Boesen mailed jewelry, stuffed animals, candy, underwear, and cash to the child at a fictitious address in Ohio provided by the Postal Inspection Service. In March 2016, Boesen flew from Virginia to Cleveland, OH, believing he would meet the 14-year-old for sex. He was arrested after getting off the plane. Boesen was carrying a pink sex toy with batteries purchased for the child, two boxes of condoms, and a cell phone purchased for the child with a contract in her name. In a subsequent interview, Boesen admitted having had sex with at least 12 other underage females, ranging from 15 to 17 years of age. Boesen also said he had instructed “hundreds” of underage females how to masturbate and showed them how to record themselves and upload their videos to online platforms. Boesen pleaded guilty in a federal court in Ohio to enticement involving the U.S. Mail and the Internet.

It is a federal offense to knowingly distribute or receive any child pornography by mail or other means of interstate or international commerce. Using the mail to transmit materials that exploit children debases the integrity of the postal system and further endangers the safety and well-being of young victims. The Inspection Service assigns specially trained Inspectors to investigate incidents when the mail is used for this purpose.

The Postal Inspection Service partners with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Department of Justice Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, and the 94 U.S. District Attorney’s Offices across the United States to investigate child sexual exploitation involving the U.S. Mail and the Internet.

SEX OFFENDER ATTACKS CHILD WHILE AWAITING TRIAL
Postal Inspector Brody Burns
Fort Worth Division
In June 2017, as the result of a plea agreement in an Inspection Service investigation, Omar Flores pleaded guilty in Texas state court to soliciting a minor to engage in sex with him in Collin County, TX. Flores sought therapy for his sexual addiction before this case went to trial in an effort to gain leniency from the court. During a therapy session, Flores admitted repeatedly sexually assaulting his six-year-old niece in Denton, TX. Flores also admitted having child pornography on his laptop computer. The therapist contacted Denton County Police, who executed a search warrant and conducted an investigation into the sexual assault. Flores was sentenced to two 25-year prison terms for aggravated sexual assault and continued sexual assault of the child, running concurrent to the eight-year sentence for the enticement investigation in which we participated. Flores’s continuing attacks in Denton County would not have been discovered if not for the Inspection Service’s earlier case in Collin County, and the child in this case would have continued to be victimized.
Keeping Employees Safe and Secure

SAME DAY ARREST OF POST OFFICE ROBBER
Inspector Sean McStravick
Philadelphia Division

On November 19, 2015, a robber wearing a mask and carrying a handgun entered the Castor Retail Unit in Philadelphia, PA. The robber informed the clerk of a robbery and demanded money. He jumped the counter, reached into a cash drawer, and stole cash and money orders. The robber then jumped back over the counter and fled the retail unit. Postal Inspectors canvassed the neighborhood and located a customer who saw the vehicle used in the getaway. A vehicle matching the description was found that afternoon. The customer identified it as the one seen in the robbery.

Postal Inspectors determined the owner of the vehicle, Antwain Tomlin, lived at the residence where the vehicle was parked. A witness at the residence said Tomlin had returned home carrying a bag. He took the bag into the house and immediately left. Inspectors were waiting for Tomlin when he returned home a short time later. He consented to a search of his vehicle. Inside, Inspectors located a plastic glove that appeared similar to the gloves worn during the robbery. Tomlin also allowed Inspectors to search his residence. There, they located the handgun used during the robbery, $1,622 in cash, and postal money orders matching the denominations of the money orders taken. Tomlin confessed to the robbery during the ensuing interview with Inspectors and was subsequently arrested.

Tomlin pleaded guilty to robbery and felony possession of a firearm. On July 25, 2017, he was sentenced to 20 years’ imprisonment followed by five years’ supervised release, and ordered to pay $2,358 restitution to the Postal Service.

In 2017, Postal Inspectors took a more targeted approach to audiences who need to hear important fraud prevention tips. We leveraged the positive reputation the Inspection Service enjoys within its corporate parent, the U.S. Postal Service. We found postal employees receptive to advice for protecting their families and themselves from fraud. Postal Inspectors held fraud prevention workshops at the Postal Service’s Washington, DC, headquarters for postal employees and offered compelling reasons why they should take a few simple steps upon retirement to guard their assets from being exploited by scammers. We also used the Postal Service’s corporate communications platforms as well as social media to reach other employees.

SAFE AND SECURE

In FY 2017, the Criminal Investigations Group completed the Active Shooter Safe and Secure initiative. At the conclusion of this initiative, 4,600 presentations were conducted, which reached approximately 168,324 postal employees nationally.

VIOLENT CRIMES

In 2017, Inspectors and Postal Police responded to 1,518 incidents of violent crimes, making 78 arrests for robberies, 79 burglary arrests, and arresting 259 individuals for assaults and threats on postal employees.
Deploying Security

Protecting postal employees, our facilities, and the mail they process and handle there is of vital importance to the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service. Ensuring the Postal Service can continue providing service to the American public in the event of an attack, natural disaster, or other crime involves coordinated protection planning efforts and a thorough evaluation of every vulnerability.

Inspectors and Postal Police Officers ensure the safety of nearly 500,000 employees and 36,000 postal facilities. Our uniformed Postal Police Officers are assigned to major postal facilities throughout the country. These officers provide perimeter security, escort high-value mail shipments, and perform other essential protective functions. To help accomplish this mission, the Inspection Service conducts annual risk assessments to ensure security controls are in place.

During FY 2017, we conducted security reviews of 735 postal facilities using the Vulnerability Risk Assessment Tool (VRAT). VRAT is a comprehensive, risk-based model to identify security deficiencies. Based on an analysis of crimes against persons and property in each area where a postal facility exists, these annual Postal Inspection Service risk assessments ensure security controls are in place to mitigate the risks in each area.
Safeguarding Revenue and Assets

MAIL TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT (MTE) RECOVERY

The Postal Inspection Service Mail Transportation Equipment (MTE) Recovery Program helps the Postal Service save money. When the Postal Service does not have to replace lost, stolen, or misused mail transportation equipment, it realizes a cost savings along with the logistical benefit of having the equipment it needs when it needs it. In FY 2017, the Inspection Service recovered $1.5 million in MTE.

Postal Inspectors also make 675 MTE loss-prevention visits to postal employees and customers across the nation.

The U.S. Postal Service delivers 154 billion pieces of mail annually, more efficiently and at a lower cost than any comparable post. It does so without the financial support of the American taxpayer. It is a self-funding entity that derives its revenues entirely through the sale of postal products and services. For that reason, the Postal Service relies on its customers to pay the required postage costs.

Postal Inspectors work with Postal Service groups to protect revenue. Reviews of short-paid postage indicating possible fraud are investigated.

REVENUE INVESTIGATIONS

The Revenue Investigations Program was restructured as a jump team consisting of ten Inspectors and 13 Revenue Fraud Analysts located across the country and four analysts and a Program Manager assigned to National Headquarters.

The Revenue Investigations Program identified $7,603,363 in losses to the USPS and recovered $1,920,259 during FY 2017.

Several significant cases were investigated by the Revenue Investigations Program during FY 2017. In a Los Angeles Division case, an individual was arrested for passing 884 bad checks to purchase stamps since January 2014, resulting in losses to the USPS totaling $350,000. The owner of a Mail Service Provider in Connecticut pleaded guilty to defrauding the USPS by deliberately entering unpaid mail at multiple USPS locations around the country. He entered approximately 3.5 million pieces of mail without payment, resulting in a loss to the USPS of $1.6 million. Another Mail Service Provider, in Colorado, agreed to a settlement with the USPS in the amount of $1.95 million for failing to pay proper postage by underreporting the size and weights of the packages mailed.

Two years in prison for Bulk Mail Executive
Postal Inspector Martin Vega, Jr.
Boston Division

Robert Kuss admitted to defrauding the Postal Service through documentation that falsely indicated his Cheshire, CT, bulk mailing firm had already paid for at least 125 mailings through an advance deposit account. Kuss brought bulk mailings to Post Offices along with authentic-looking forms he had filled out and stamped, making it appear the mail had been brought to and verified by a Postal Service business mail entry unit. For a 20-month period in 2014 through 2016, Kuss was able to send out more than 3.2 million pieces of mail without paying for almost $750,000 in postage. In December 2016, Kuss pleaded guilty to mail fraud in a Hartford, CT, federal court. He was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release, and must make full restitution to the Postal Service.

$1.95 million settlement to resolve claims for unpaid postage
Postal Inspector Robert Rifenburgh
Denver Division

The Inspection Service’s diligence in exposing the alleged fraudulent mailing practices of overnight delivery firm, At Last Fulfillment, and its parent company, Newgistics, Inc., was instrumental in the company’s payment of a $1.95 million civil penalty following a five-year investigation led by Denver Division Postal Inspectors. The team’s hard work was rewarded, revealing alleged chronic short-payments and under-reported sizes and weights of packages the company mailed at postal facilities in Ontario, Louisville, and Aurora, CO. After the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Denver agreed to pursue the case under Affirmative Civil Enforcement, At Last / Newgistics opted for a settlement without admitting liability. On June 29, the company paid $1,856,762 to the Postal Service. Included in the settlement was $330,000 to cover the Inspection Service’s investigative costs.

MAIL TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT (MTE) RECOVERY

The Postal Inspection Service Mail Transportation Equipment (MTE) Recovery Program helps the Postal Service save money. When the Postal Service does not have to replace lost, stolen, or misused mail transportation equipment, it realizes a cost savings along with the logistical benefit of having the equipment it needs when it needs it. In FY 2017, the Inspection Service recovered $1.5 million in MTE. Following up on tips received about equipment, working with customers and businesses in the plastics industry, and coordinating with law enforcement partners about stolen MTE gets cost-saving results. Postal Inspectors also made 675 MTE loss-prevention visits to postal employees and customers across the nation.
Interdictions at the International Service Centers (ISCs) are all about protection – protecting USPS revenue and its brand, and protecting the American public from fraud. Inspection Service screeners remove parcels bearing counterfeit postage from the international mail stream, protecting USPS revenue. In FY 2017, Inspectors removed 3,652 parcels with an estimated postage value of $266,969 from the mail stream.

Screeners also use the legal process to remove mail pieces containing counterfeit postal money orders. These interdictions protect the integrity of this product, ensuring USPS money orders continue to be widely trusted financial instruments. This year, Inspectors interdicted 13,724 counterfeit postal money orders, and 550 non-counterfeit postal money orders, with a total face value of $14,157,204.

Foreign lotteries are illegal in the U.S. These lottery solicitations are almost always criminal scams designed to dupe victims into sending money to the scammers. Using the legal process, Inspection Service screeners interdict illegal lottery mailings and protect victims from criminal misuse of the mail. In FY 2017, interdictions removed 3,652 parcels with an estimated postage value of $266,969 from the mail stream.

Screeners also use the legal process to remove mail pieces containing counterfeit postal money orders. These interdictions protect the integrity of this product, ensuring USPS money orders continue to be widely trusted financial instruments. This year, Inspectors interdicted 13,724 counterfeit postal money orders, and 550 non-counterfeit postal money orders, with a total face value of $14,157,204.

The process used by Postal Inspectors with PUASP—the first region to work toward compliance with the standards—became a model for the other regions. The process included focused training, a self-assessment tool, a compliance review program, and security review criteria. Postal Inspectors will be conducting further security training workshops and helping to build security expertise within each region. Compliance with the S58 and S59 security standards and the companion certification program safeguards mail service around the world.
At the Forensic Laboratory (FLS), in Dulles, VA, highly trained forensic scientists and technical specialists play a key role in identifying, apprehending, prosecuting and convicting individuals responsible for postal related criminal offenses. They provide scientific and technical expertise to the criminal and security investigations of the Postal Inspection Service.

Postal Inspectors often rely on forensic scientists, technical specialists and related units—Questioned Documents, Fingerprint, Physical Sciences and Digital Evidence—for their expertise in helping to solve postal crimes.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

FLS’s commitment to quality assurance was exemplified by the continuation and expansion of our accreditation by the board of the American National Standards Institute/American Society for Quality. ANSI-ASQ accreditation holds us to strict, high-level standards. Our reaccreditation came after detailed inspection and certification of 13 on-site and ten off-site facilities using the internationally accepted ISO/IEC 17025 standards for testing laboratories. Our scope of accreditation was expanded in FY 2017 to include two additional digital evidence locations in Washington, DC, and Raleigh, NC.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

FLS’s commitment to serve and support the Postal Inspection Service was demonstrated through our casework achievements, technical assistance, expert testimony, and training provided to US Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) personnel. Our scientists and specialists examined 117,277 items and identified 940 suspects in USPIS investigations; coordinated 44 new requests for DNA analysis; and analyzed 102 items of evidence for DNA, leading to 12 suspect identifications. Twenty-two DNA profiles from USPIS cases were entered into the FBI’s Combined DNA Index System, resulting in 17 matches and vital investigative information for the field. FLS also submitted 23 exhibits to the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network, resulting in two matches, and their Incident Response Team responded ten times for six cases, to seven different locations, providing Inspectors with on-site crime scene processing support. FLS personnel appeared in court 47 times and provided testimony 32 times.

FLS implemented an electronic version of their Forensic Laboratory Examination Report, allowing Inspectors immediate access to results of examinations once the report is electronically signed and closed. The Questioned Documents and Imaging Unit transitioned to completely electronic case documentation. All case notes, reports, and quality assurance documents are now prepared electronically, converted to PDFs, and then uploaded to the USPIS intranet where they may be easily viewed and archived. To facilitate this paperless process, forensic document examiners were provided with touch screen monitors, and can use a stylus to annotate images of their evidence directly on-screen. The Physical Sciences Unit is now using a new Raman microscope, an instrument that helps us better identify chemical components of a wide variety of evidence types.

Three FLS chemists served on subcommittees of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science. These national committees are directly responsible for the development of documentary standards and guidelines, which ultimately improve the scientific basis of forensic evidence used in criminal cases.
Preparing Our Workforce

The Career Development Unit (CDU) is responsible for preparing, developing and training our workforce to fulfill the mission of the Postal Inspection Service. CDU has oversight of the two basic training programs for Postal Inspectors and Postal Police Officers, the assessment center process for Postal Inspector applicants, the polygraph unit, and in-service training programs – including the Career Leadership Academy and the Leadership and Employee Development Program (LEDP).

In FY 2017, our in-service training staff delivered 94 classroom offerings to 1,314 USPIS employees. Employees also completed 6,321 sessions of 41 CDU online courses. To ensure all CDU delivered training is current and relevant, 13 subject matter expert (SME) meetings were conducted.

Our Executive Resources and Leadership Development team delivered six Leadership Academy classes to 172 assistant inspectors in charge, team leaders, program managers, Postal Police sergeants, captains and lieutenants, professional/technical/administrative (PTA) personnel with supervisory responsibilities, and second-level PTA managers. They also worked with the LEDP project team to develop three WebEx training courses and delivered 26 training sessions to 696 LEDP coordinators, current participants and Inspection Service managers.

We assessed 158 Postal Inspector applicants. To support the hiring process, our polygraph examiners administered 96 examinations to Postal Inspector candidates. They also conducted 34 examinations in support of criminal investigations for Inspection Service field divisions.

The basic training staff conducted four Basic Inspector Training classes and four Postal Police Officer Basic Training classes. Eighty-two new Postal Inspectors graduated and were assigned to the field divisions. Forty-seven new Postal Police Officers graduated and have assignments protecting employees, postal infrastructure and customers in major Postal Service facilities nationwide.
The Postal Inspection Service’s radio and emergency communications are managed by our National Law Enforcement Communications Center (NLECC)/Radio Unit (NRU). NLECC provides critical public safety services to Postal Inspectors, Postal Police Officers and other law enforcement agencies. These services include, but are not limited to: monitoring alarms at Postal Service facilities, centralized monitoring of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service radio communications network, providing after-hours emergency phone coverage for all of our offices, and critical incident reporting to senior management personnel. NLECC staff members access law enforcement and intelligence information from confidential databases such as the National Crime Information Center.

The Radio Communications unit ensures the U.S. Postal Inspection Service radio network is fully operational and implements new technologies that can best support the organization’s mission. The radio network infrastructure currently connects all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and additional U.S. territories to NLECC.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INVESTIGATION</th>
<th>CASES INITIATED</th>
<th>ARRESTS*</th>
<th>CONVICTIONS*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSAULTS AND THREATS (assaults and threats against on-duty postal employees)</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>BURGLARY</td>
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<td>CHILD EXPLOITATION</td>
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<td>MAIL FRAUD</td>
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<td>MAIL THEFT (theft and possession of stolen mail)</td>
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<td>PROHIBITED MAIL NARCOTICS (narcotics, steroids, drug proceeds and drug paraphernalia)</td>
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<td>MONEY LAUNDERING (postal money orders)</td>
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<td>NONMAILABLE, RESTRICTED MATTER (firearms, weapons, intoxicants, extortion threats and miscellaneous matter)</td>
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<td>REVENUE INVESTIGATIONS</td>
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<td>ROBBERY</td>
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<td>SECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION (consumer outreach and security countermeasures)</td>
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<td>SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCES AND ITEMS (includes bombs, explosives, threats, hazardous items, non-threatening items, and hoax CBRNE**)</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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* Arrests and convictions reported in this period may be related to cases from prior reporting periods. Convictions include pretrial diversions.

** CBRNE refers to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive material.
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