

# Cameron Co. Investigation Leads to Money Laundering by Terrorist Group

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BROWNSVILLE – An investigation is underway into possible terrorist activity in Cameron County.

Authorities have one man in custody.

Court records reveal he pled guilty to being involved with a Palestinian terrorist organization.

The plea resulted in a series of raids early Thursday.

Three search and seizure warrants were executed in Brownsville, Laguna Heights and San Benito.

The suspect was born in Palestine, but has prior criminal charges in the Rio Grande Valley.

Federal agencies such as the Homeland Security Investigations and the Cameron County District Attorney's Office raided a luxurious home in Brownsville.

Other law enforcement officials raided a car lot by the name of Rafidi Auto Sales in Laguna Heights.

The last raid was at Lone Star Motors in San Benito.

“This is part of an investigation by a gentlemen of the name George Rafidi as a result of the separate raids there was a total of 21 vehicles seized and some money and some documents from

the residence,” said Cameron County District Attorney Luis Saenz.

CHANNEL 5 NEWS was on the ground as authorities inspected over 10 cars on the lot in San Benito.

Computers and other boxes were placed inside a van by investigators.

The man who claimed he was the business owner was on the scene. The district attorney says the man in custody and the business owner are brothers.

When asked about the reports of illegal activity at his business, Fayes Rafidi said, “We don't have nothing. That's all this. That's b\*\*\* s\*\*\*. That's nothing.”

The DA says George Rafidi is the main suspect in custody.

“When you say nothing illegal. Our angle is more of yes we believe that there is a being used as criminal instruments. We believe I can tell you that probably the investigation is centered around some money laundering and we believe some of the proceeds of that money is being shipped overseas,” said Saenz.

George Rafidi, who is believed to be the brother of Fayes Rafidi, has a long criminal history.

Last year he was accused of lying to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

In 1997, he plead guilty to having ties to the popular front for the Liberation of Palestine, a group the U.S. government designated a terrorist organization.

When George Rafidi was detained in the Middle East, he was released as part of a prisoner exchange between Israel and Jordan.

He entered the U.S. on a tourist's visa during Dec. 2000; the DA says as of a now there is no connection with Mexico.

Saenz adds the businesses will remain open for now.

The investigation is ongoing and more people are expected to be arrested.

[Read the indictment filed against George Rafidi here.](#)

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