



Two men jailed for running 'forgery factory'

By Janet Maitland

Two men, one of them from East Finchley, have been jailed for making and selling thousands of counterfeit documents.

Arsene Meci, 26, an Albanian national, ran what police describe as a 'forgery factory' from his home in Western Road, N2. Using computers, laminators and professional printing equipment, he produced fake driving licences, national identity cards, passports, and construction and security certification cards.

These were then sold by broker Medi Krasniqi, 47, a British national of Albanian descent living in Finsbury Park. Krasniqi was in charge of locating clients who were charged between £50 and £800 for made-to-order documents.

Major coup for National Crime Agency

The men were arrested as part of a three-year investigation by the National Crime Agency into an Albanian-led forgery network in North London which has led to 17 convictions and more than 68 years of prison sentences.

During the investigation, more than 300 fake passports and 200 counterfeit national identity cards were seized, along with databases containing thousands of images of fake documents and images of around

20,000 people.

When Meci's flat was searched, officers discovered computers with more than 8,000 images and templates for false documents, along with a number of photos, blank cards and fake passports ready to be made up.

Dangers caused by forged certificates

Both men pleaded guilty to conspiring to produce false identity documents, possession of false ID and money laundering charges. At Chelmsford Crown Court on 12 January, Meci was jailed for six and a half years while Krasniqi got five and a half years. Meci will also face deportation following his sentence.

"Krasniqi and Meci were prolific forgers who could supply almost any form of ID," said investigating officer Carl Eade. "They helped people to obtain work or services they weren't qualified for or entitled to. One of the forms of ID they specialised in was certification to work in the construction industry. We have no way of knowing whether their clients were actually qualified to do the jobs they were then able to apply for."



From the left, Michael Moody, Syd McGowan and Gerald Haines celebrate their TV appearance on Mel and Sue. Photo Mike Coles

Chefs cook up a treat for Mel and Sue

Three men from Age UK Barnet's cookery classes for older men were the star chefs in Great British Bake Off presenters Mel and Sue's new chat show in mid-January.

Gerald Haines, 87, Syd McGowan, 72, and Michael Moody, 68, who attend the classes at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2, cooked up a tasty chicken casserole with dumplings, a dish they learned on their Age UK Barnet cookery course.

Instead of using celebrity chefs, the show is bringing on real cooks to demonstrate a favourite recipe.

Joining Gerald, Syd and Michael on the show were Jo Brand and Dr Christian Jessen

of TV's Embarrassing Bodies.

Syd chopped the veg, Michael prepared the chicken and Gerald made the dumplings, with Jo Brand and Mel and Sue as their helpers.

"It was one of the best experiences of my life! Everyone made us feel so comfortable that I didn't feel nervous," says Gerald. Michael agrees: "We felt really looked after and Mel and Sue put us completely at ease."

Syd, who couldn't stop smiling throughout the show,

says: "It's odd having six huge cameras on you the whole time, but as soon as you go live, you forget they're there."

If you or someone you know is interested in attending Age UK Barnet's men's cookery classes email Karen on eatwell@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call 020 8150 0967.

Walking football

Walking football for over 55s is all the fun of five-a-side, with no running.

Join in the nearest sessions on Thursday mornings, from 11am to 12 noon for £3 per hour at Power League, Bobby Moore Way, N10 1ST. For more information, contact Roger Engledow on 07817 111 642 or new10dger@virginmedia.com.



Man injured crossing High Road

By Janet Maitland

An elderly man was injured when he was in collision with a van as he used the pedestrian crossing on the High Road close to Huntingdon Road at about 5.15pm on Tuesday 13 January.

The man, believed to be 85, was treated by the ambulance crew at the scene of the accident and then taken to Barnet Hospital. His injuries are described as non-life-threatening. No arrests were made. A report has been submitted to the Met Prosecutions Traffic Unit for investigation.

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