

U.S. MARSHALS

MOST WANTED

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 24, 2020

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U.S. Marshals Asking for International Assistance to Locate Fraudster

\$25K reward offered for fugitive who has evaded capture more than two decades

Washington, DC - The U.S. Marshals Service is asking for the assistance of the global community to help bring a 15 Most Wanted fugitive to justice. [John Ruffo](#), now 65, was convicted of a \$350 million bank fraud scheme in the late 1990s and sentenced to 17 ½ years in prison. Approximately \$13 million of the money has not been recovered.

After his 1998 conviction for his role in one of the largest bank fraud scams in American history, Ruffo was continued on a \$10 million bond and ordered to report to a federal prison in New Jersey on Nov. 9, 1998, to begin serving his 210-month sentence. Ruffo never showed, an arrest warrant was issued the next day, and U.S. Marshals quickly uncovered his last known tracks.

Investigation revealed that on Nov. 9, 1998, a rental car driven by Ruffo arrived at the long-term parking lot at John F. Kennedy Airport. Ruffo is believed to have rented the car earlier in the day in Manhattan. He also withdrew money from an ATM on the way to JFK Airport.



Ruffo withdraws money from an ATM, Nov. 9, 1998



Ruffo departs after cash withdrawal.

Since 1998, U.S. Marshals have pursued hundreds of leads across the country and around the world. While there have been numerous reported sightings, the ATM photograph of Ruffo from Nov. 9, 1998, is the last confirmed sighting of Ruffo.

“He slipped away nearly 22 years ago, but the world is a lot smaller today than when Ruffo fled,” said U.S. Marshals Service Director Donald Washington. “While it remains possible that he is in the United States, we strongly believe that John Ruffo is living overseas, likely in Europe, the Caribbean, or Central or South America. It only takes one tip for us to catch up with Ruffo. By now, he is likely well established and comfortable in whatever alias he is living under. He could be anywhere on the globe.”

Ruffo is known to have extensive international connections through his time as a New York businessman. He had previously traveled to Aruba and was known to show particular interest in Italy, where he has also traveled in the past.

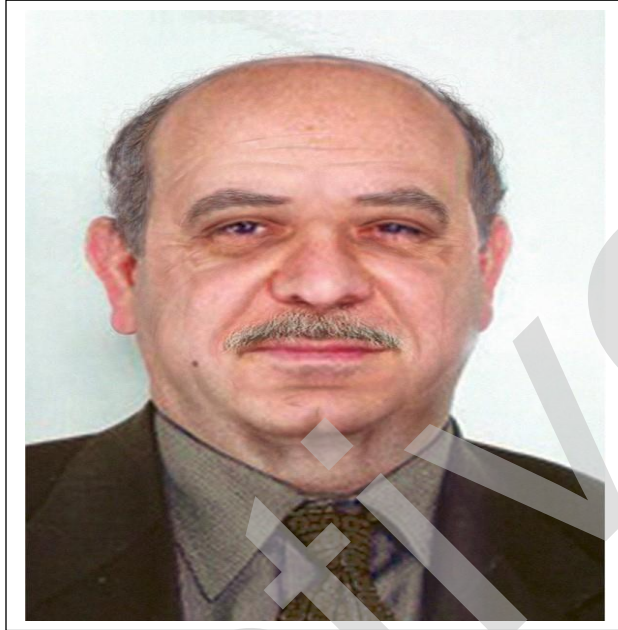
“The public is by far our greatest resource,” said Nick Proffitt, U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Virginia. “We are asking for your assistance to get this fugitive’s photo out there so we can bring him in together. He has been on our 15 Most Wanted list for 20 years, and it is time for John Ruffo to pay his debt to society.”

Ruffo stands 5 feet 5 inches and in 1998 weighed approximately 170 pounds. He is known to be computer savvy and enjoys fine wines, gambling, and nice hotels. He is reportedly lactose intolerant. Ruffo was known to be a storyteller, someone who liked to stretch the truth, and had a desire to impress others. He has been called a master manipulator.

Given the strong international ties and likelihood that Ruffo is living overseas, wanted posters have been translated into seven languages:

- [English](#)
- [Arabic](#)
- [French](#)

- [Italian](#)
- [Mandarin Chinese](#)
- [Portuguese](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Spanish](#)



An age-progression rendering reveals what Ruffo may look like today.

A reward of up to **\$25,000** is offered for information leading directly to Ruffo's arrest. Anyone with information is urged to contact the nearest [USMS District Office](#), the U.S. Marshals Service Communications Center at **1-800-336-0102**, or submit a tip using [USMS Tips](#).

Additional information about the U.S. Marshals Service can be found at <http://www.usmarshals.gov>.

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