



# JOINT PRESS RELEASE



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## **FIVE CHARGED IN ALAMEDA COUNTY FOR THEIR ROLES IN CONSPIRACY TO COLLECT MORE THAN \$5 MILLION IN FORECLOSURE DELAY SCHEME THAT TARGETED DISTRESSED HOMEOWNERS THROUGHOUT STATE**

Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O'Malley and Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office Bill L. Lewis today announced that charges have been filed in Alameda County Superior Court against five defendants in connection with a state-wide bankruptcy fraud scheme.

The criminal operation targeted distressed homeowners by promising to delay foreclosures and evictions in exchange for cash up-front, followed by monthly fees. The defendants offered to delay trustees' sales for their clients, but did not disclose that they accomplished the delay by recording backdated and forged deeds of trust. Additionally, the defendants filed false bankruptcies and sent copies to the trustees responsible for the sale of clients' properties, which resulted in delaying the sale of the home until the lender could get relief from the automatic stay caused by the bankruptcy filing. Clients' signatures were forged on the deeds of trust. A counterfeit notary stamp and forged notary signature were used to complete and record the deeds of trust.

The defendants and the charges against them are as follows:

*Karl Robinson, 49, of Long Beach, – 1 count of Conspiracy to offer a false or forged instrument; 13 counts of offering a false and forged document for recordation*

*Michael Bachmeier, 44, of Lake Elsinore, – 1 count of Conspiracy to offer a false or forged instrument; 12 counts of offering a false and forged document for recordation*

*Thomas Powell, 33, of Newport Beach, – 1 count of Conspiracy to offer a false or forged instrument; 12 counts of offering a false and forged document for recordation*

*Yamen Elasadi, 34, of Irvine, – 1 count of Conspiracy to offer a false or forged instrument; 12 counts of offering a false and forged document for recordation*

*Jahi Kokayi, 43, of Studio City, – 1 count of Conspiracy to offer a false or forged instrument; 3 counts of offering a false and forged document for recordation*

On September 20, 2013 the Alameda County Superior Court issued arrest warrants for five defendants charged with the conspiracy (California Penal Code section 182(a)(1)); and multiple counts of recording a false or forged document (CA Penal Code section 115(a)). Three of the defendants (Bachmeier, Elasadi and Powell) were arrested on Friday, September 27, 2013 and a fourth (Robinson) was arrested today. A fifth defendant (Kokayi) has not yet been located and is currently being sought by investigators.

This case was initiated when and the Alameda County Recorder's Office reported the alleged fraud to the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. Investigators determined that the fraudulent operation began in 2008 when defendant Karl Robinson filed an initial bankruptcy in his own name. Analysis by investigators has determined that the defendants filed more than 130 bankruptcies in the state of California and victimized hundreds of clients.

Investigators estimate that the defendants collected in excess of \$5 million from victims between 2008 and 2010.

This investigation is continuing and is a result of a joint effort by the Alameda County District Attorney's Office; United States Office of Trustees; Federal Housing and Finance Administration – Office of Inspector General; the Riverside County Sheriff's Department; the Orange County Sheriff's Department; the Newport Beach Police Department; the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; the United States Attorney's Office; and the FBI.

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