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FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS ILLINOIS ATTORNEY IN MORTGAGE FRAUD SCHEME

CHICAGO — A federal jury today convicted an Illinois attorney of fraudulently obtaining loans related to the purchase, maintenance and sale of properties on Chicago’s South Side.

JESSICA ARONG O’BRIEN fraudulently caused lenders to issue and refinance approximately \$1.4 million in mortgage and commercial loans by making false representations and concealing material facts in documents submitted to the lenders. O’Brien used the fraudulently obtained mortgage loan proceeds to purchase an investment property in the 600 block of West 46th Street in Chicago. She fraudulently refinanced the mortgage on the property, as well as on a second investment property in the 800 block of West 54th Street in Chicago. O’Brien then fraudulently obtained a commercial line of credit to maintain the properties, before selling them to a loan officer – co-defendant MARIA BARTKO – and a straw buyer whom O’Brien knew would fraudulently obtain mortgage loans.

The jury convicted O’Brien, 50, of Chicago, on both counts against her, including one count of mail fraud affecting a financial institution, and one count of bank fraud. Each count is punishable by a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison. U.S. District Judge Thomas M. Durkin set sentencing for July 6, 2018.

The conviction was announced by John R. Lausch, Jr., United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Jeffrey S. Sallet, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Catherine Huber, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Central Region of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, Office of Inspector General. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew F. Madden and Tyler C. Murray.

Evidence at trial revealed that O'Brien carried out the fraud scheme from 2004 to 2007. At the time, O'Brien was employed as a Special Assistant Attorney General for the Illinois Department of Revenue, while also owning a real estate company, O'Brien Realty LLC, and working part time as a loan officer for Amronbanc Mortgage Corp. in Lincolnwood. At the time, Bartko was employed at Amronbanc as a loan officer.

Bartko, of Chicago, pleaded guilty before trial to one count of mail fraud affecting a financial institution. Judge Durkin will schedule Bartko's sentencing hearing at a later date.

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