



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Ismail J. Ramsey
Northern District of California

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REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL PLEADS GUILTY TO \$55 MILLION MORTGAGE FRAUD CONSPIRACY

Defendant Admitted His Role in a Scheme to Fraudulently Originate More Than \$55 Million in Residential Mortgages Using Fake Documents to Fraudulently Boost Loan Applicant Income

SAN FRANCISCO – Tjoman Buditaslim pleaded guilty in federal court in San Francisco yesterday to wire fraud conspiracy, announced United States Attorney Ismail J. Ramsey; Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General (HUD-OIG), Western Region Special Agent-in-Charge Mark Kaminsky; U.S. Postal Inspection Service Inspector-in-Charge Steve Sherwood; and Federal Housing Finance Agency, Office of Inspector General (FHFA-OIG), Western Region Special Agent-in-Charge Herminia Neblina.

In his plea agreement, Buditaslim, 52, of Daly City, California, admitted that from 2018 through 2022 he conspired with others—including Jose Tellez, Jose de Jesus Martinez, and Travis Holasek, all of whom previously pleaded guilty—to originate 102 home mortgage loans worth more than \$55 million based on false and fraudulent loan application information, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349. Buditaslim admitted he worked with his co-conspirators to create fraudulent documents—including judicial divorce decrees, alimony/child supports checks, bank statements, and loan applications—and submitted those documents to multiple loan companies, which relied on falsely inflated income information in the fraudulent documents to extend mortgages. Buditaslim also admitted that many of the mortgage loans were insured by the Federal Housing Administration (“FHA”), and he admitted that the FHA lost approximately \$486,484.38 to keep some of the fraudulent loans from going into foreclosure.

Tellez, 27, of San Jose, pleaded guilty on July 24, 2024, to conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349. Tellez admitted in his plea agreement that, from 2019 through 2022, he worked as a loan officer at a mortgage company, where his job was to receive home mortgage loan applications and supporting documentation to determine if applicants qualified for mortgages based on his employer’s and FHA rules and guidelines. He also admitted that, as part of the conspiracy, he helped originate approximately 30 home mortgage loans worth more than \$17 million based on what he knew to be false and fraudulent income information in loan applications submitted by Buditaslim and others working with him. He also admitted that he knew he was required to stop and flag applications that contained false and fraudulent representations about income, but that he instead knowingly assisted in originating and funding the fraudulent loans and that he earned a commission on each of the 30 fraudulent loans he helped originated. Finally, Tellez admitted that

many of the mortgage loans he helped originate were insured by the FHA, which he admitted lost approximately \$265,457 to keep some of the fraudulent loans from going into foreclosure.

Martinez, 59, of Daly City, also pleaded guilty on July 24, 2024, to conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349. In his plea agreement, Martinez admitted that, from 2018 through 2022, he worked as a licensed real estate agent representing buyers looking to purchase homes. Martinez further admitted that, to earn commission payments for himself, he referred clients he knew would not otherwise qualify for home mortgage loans to Buditaslim, who he knew would qualify the clients for home mortgage loans based on false and fraudulent loan application materials and information. Ultimately, Martinez admitted that as a result of his involvement in the conspiracy, his clients fraudulently received 49 loans worth a total of approximately \$27.7 million for which he earned nearly \$590,000 in real estate broker commissions. Finally, Martinez admitted that many of the mortgage loans his clients obtained as part of this scheme were insured by the FHA, which he admitted lost approximately \$265,457 to keep some of the fraudulent loans from going into foreclosure.

“These defendants used their professional knowledge of the mortgage industry to perpetrate a fraud on unsophisticated home buyers, funneling these victims into loans for which they were not qualified,” said U.S. Attorney Ismail J. Ramsey. “My office is committed to protecting all victims of fraud, whether federal agencies, Northern California residents, or—as happened here—both.”

“The defendants took advantage of their knowledge and training in the mortgage industry to circumvent the rules and abused the positions of trust they held as real estate professionals and gatekeepers of FHA-insured loans in order to line their own pockets,” said Western Region Special Agent-in-Charge Mark Kaminsky with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General. “They created and passed false documents to qualify individuals unaware of their schemes for loans those individuals would not have otherwise qualified for. HUD OIG will continue to work with its prosecutorial and law enforcement partners to vigorously pursue those who seek to profit by abusing HUD-funded programs.”

“FHFA OIG will vigorously investigate criminal offenses that impact the integrity of the residential mortgage market. In this case, a loan officer and real estate broker each had a duty to conduct business honestly but instead chose to engage in mortgage fraud, and some of those loans were later sold in mortgage-backed securities,” said Herminia Neblina, Special-Agent-in-Charge of FHFA-OIG’s Western Region. “We are proud to have partnered with our colleagues and the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the effort to prosecute these financial criminals.”

Buditaslim, Tellez, and Martinez, and Holasek, 51, of San Francisco, were originally indicted by a federal grand jury on November 7, 2023. All four defendants were charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349. All of the defendants were also charged with multiple counts of wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343: Buditaslim and Tellez were each charged with five counts of wire fraud; Holasek was charged with four counts of wire fraud; and Martinez was charged with three counts of wire fraud. Buditaslim, Holasek, and Martinez were also each charged with one count of aggravated identity theft, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1028A(a)(1).

Buditaslim, Tellez, and Martinez are scheduled to be sentenced on October 30, 2024, in San Francisco by the Honorable Charles R. Breyer, Senior U.S. District Court Judge. They each face a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss from the crime, plus restitution, following their wire fraud conspiracy convictions. However, any sentence will be imposed by the court only after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553. Holasek’s next scheduled appearance is for a status conference before Judge Breyer on November 6, 2024.

The case is being prosecuted by the Corporate and Securities Fraud and General Crimes Sections of the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Christiaan Highsmith is the Assistant U.S. Attorney prosecuting the case, with the

assistance of Lance Libatique and Aarian Beti. The prosecution is the result of a multi-year investigation by FHA-OIG, HUD OIG, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, with assistance from the California Department of Justice.