



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois

Joel R. Levin
Acting United States Attorney

Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse
219 South Dearborn Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353-5300

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 12, 2017

FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS ILLINOIS ATTORNEY IN MORTGAGE FRAUD SCHEME

CHICAGO — An Illinois attorney has been indicted by a federal grand jury for 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, according to an indictment returned in federal court in Chicago. O'Brien used the fraudulently obtained mortgage loan proceeds to purchase an investment property in the 600 block of West 46th Street in Chicago, and 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, the indictment states. O'Brien then fraudulently obtained a commercial line of credit to maintain the properties, before selling them to co-defendant MARIA BARTKO and a straw buyer whom O'Brien knew would fraudulently obtain mortgage loans, according to the indictment.

The indictment charges O'Brien, 49, of Chicago, and Bartko, 49, of Chicago, with one count of mail fraud affecting a financial institution. O'Brien is also charged with one count of bank fraud. Arraignment is set for April 20, 2017, at 10:00 a.m., before U.S. Magistrate Judge Sheila M. Finnegan.

The indictment was announced by Joel R. Levin, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Michael J. Anderson, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Catherine Huber, Special Agent in Charge of the Midwest Region of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, Office of Inspector General.

At the time of the alleged scheme, O'Brien was employed full time 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, the indictment states. It was at Amronbanc where O'Brien met Bartko, who was employed there as a loan officer.

The public is reminded that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Mail fraud affecting a financial institution and bank fraud are each punishable by a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew F. Madden and Tyler C. Murray.