

Florida Woman Pleads Guilty To Role In Fraudulent Home Inspection Business

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2013

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Tampa, Florida - Acting United States Attorney A. Lee Bentley, III announces that Tammy Roderick (39, Largo) pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Roderick faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison. Her sentencing hearing is scheduled for November 7, 2013.

Dean Counce pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud on September 14, 2012. On February 20, 2013, he was sentenced to 97 months in federal prison.

According to the plea agreement, Roderick and her co-conspirator, Dean Counce, owned a company called American Mortgage Field Services, LLC (AMFS). AMFS performed preservation and inspection work for homes in various phases of foreclosure, including homes that were owned by government entities such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The government entities paid servicing lenders, such as Bank of America, to protect and maintain their properties. Beginning in or around 2007, some of these servicing lenders retained AMFS to conduct periodic inspections of government-owned or insured properties to prevent unnecessary deterioration that may have resulted from neglect or vandalism.

The servicing lenders would send Counce, Roderick, and AMFS a list of properties each month that required inspection. These inspections required AMFS employees to visit a property, fill out an inspection report, and take photographs. Counce, Roderick, and others then compiled these inspection reports and transmitted them electronically to the requesting party, such as Bank of America. The servicing lenders then paid AMFS a fee per inspection.

As the real estate market declined in Florida and throughout the country, AMFS began to receive more and more requests for inspections on properties in foreclosure. Most or all of the mortgages on the properties were owned or insured by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac or FHA. The requests for inspections far exceeded AMFS's capacity to complete them. As a result, Counce, Roderick, and other AMFS employees began fabricating inspection reports.

For example, Counce and Roderick would direct that each new property be inspected the first time and that inspectors take numerous photographs, far more than were required for a single month's inspection report. AMFS employed individuals, many of whom were high school students or recent high school graduates, to use previous months' photographs to fabricate subsequent inspection reports on properties. Counce and Roderick also instructed AMFS employees to fabricate inspection reports by using publicly available websites, such as property appraiser sites, to obtain data about properties that were not inspected. AMFS employees acting under Counce and Roderick's direction

submitted the falsified inspection reports to AMFS's clients along with false claims for payments. Employees who produced large numbers of false inspection reports were often rewarded with cash bonuses.

In total, between 2007 and 2009, Bank of America remitted \$4,490,398.87 to Mid-Florida Home Securing (later known as AMFS) and, between 2009 and 2012, Bank of America paid AMFS \$19,044,973.06 for inspections, a large percentage of which were never actually performed. Based on employee reports of fabrication rates, the government estimates the loss in this case to be approximately \$12,774,102.

This case was investigated by the Federal Housing Finance Agency, Office of the Inspector General, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of the Inspector General, and the United States Secret Service. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mandy Riedel.

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