



# Department of Justice

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## **MORTGAGE FRAUD DEFENDANT SENTENCED TO THIRTY MONTHS**

Tampa, Florida - U.S. District Judge Richard A. Lazzara, today sentenced Andrea Batronie, age 31, of Land O' Lakes, to two and a half years' imprisonment to be followed by three years of supervised release for conspiring to commit mail, bank and wire fraud (herein after "mortgage fraud"). As identified in open court, Batronie conspired with defendant Luis Uribe, who pled guilty on March 27, 2008, to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. Batronie was found guilty on October 26, 2007.

According to court documents, from July 2006 through September 2007, Batronie conspired with Uribe to commit mortgage fraud. Batronie was a licensed title agent in Florida and was able to close real estate transactions. The conspirators fraudulently submitted mortgage applications under false pretenses, obtaining and disbursing the proceeds of those loans, including directing portions of the proceeds to bank accounts in their control.

Batronie was one of the principals behind Bay General Contracting Services, LLC (herein after "Bay General"). Bay General was not a licensed contracting service in the State of Florida. On at least twenty separate real estate closings, monies were fraudulently disbursed to Bay General. Numerous Notices of Commencement were filed with the Clerks of Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, and Citrus counties but no construction work was actually done. Despite the monies transferred and Notices of Commencement, Bay

General did not have a single employee nor was there a single instance in which Bay General or anyone employed by Bay General actually performed any work related to the Notices. In reality, the conspirators used Bay General to serve as a vehicle to improperly inflate the value of the properties in question, to strip actual and fraudulently created equity out of properties, and to serve as a vehicle for syphoning the proceeds from fraudulently obtained loans.

As a result of the scheme to defraud, the conspirators caused lenders to fund more than thirty-two (32) loans for a total of more than \$6 million in fraudulently obtained loans issued upon the false representations made by the conspirators in the various loan applications and documents as well as in the providing of the false documents themselves.

The case was investigated by the Tampa Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas N. Palermo.