



**United States Department of Justice  
United States Attorney's Office  
District of Minnesota**



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, April 26, 2011  
[WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN](http://WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN)

## **Maple Grove loan officer pleads guilty to participating in mortgage fraud scheme**

Earlier today in federal court in Minneapolis, a former loan officer for Wells Fargo Bank pleaded guilty to participating in a \$4.3 million mortgage fraud scheme. Larry Gene Hillard, age 56, of Maple Grove, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Hillard, who was charged on March 10, 2011, entered his plea before United States District Court Judge Ann D. Montgomery.

In his plea agreement, Hillard admitted that between 2007 and August 21, 2008, he participated in 12 fraudulent transactions with Truang Quang Tran and Thanh Van Ngo, owners of Invescorp. Hillard admitted that in his capacity as a loan officer, he received from Tran and Ngo personal information regarding several people for the purpose of running credit reports on them. He then gave those reports to Tran and Ngo. He subsequently received a loan application in the name of one of the individuals who had a good credit score. In addition, he provided Tran and Ngo with specific information about the assets and income required to qualify for a particular loan. Then, a short time later, he received loan applications that contained the information he previously provided. Hillard also admittedly completed fraudulent loan applications. The loan amounts for the 12 properties involved in this fraud scheme totaled more than \$4.3 million. The loss amount was more than \$1.4 million.

For his crime, Hillard faces a potential maximum penalty of five years in prison. Judge Montgomery will determine his sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled. This case is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christian S. Wilton.

Tran was earlier sentenced to 24 months in federal prison for his role in the scheme. On

April 20, 2011, Ngo was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison. Three co-defendants also have been sentenced.

This law enforcement action is in part sponsored by the interagency Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force. The task force was established to wage an aggressive, coordinated and proactive effort to investigate and prosecute financial crimes. It includes representatives from a broad range of federal agencies, regulatory authorities, inspectors general, and state and local law enforcement who, working together, bring to bear a powerful array of criminal and civil enforcement resources. The task force is working to improve efforts across the federal executive branch and, with state and local partners, investigate and prosecute significant financial crimes, ensure just and effective punishment for those who perpetrate financial crimes, combat discrimination in the lending and financial markets, and recover proceeds for victims of financial crimes.

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