



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

## **News Release**

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### **Federal agents honored by U.S. Attorney for their efforts against mortgage fraud**

MINNEAPOLIS—To date in 2011, more than a dozen people have been charged federally with mortgage fraud and related crimes in the District of Minnesota. These complex cases are the result of lengthy investigations by federal agents, in particular, Special Agent Andy Gibart, of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division ("IRS-CID"), Special Agent Jennifer Khan of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Inspector Christine Kroells, of the United States Postal Inspection Service ("USPIS").

In appreciation for their tireless efforts to bring these cases to fruition, U.S. Attorney B. Todd Jones honored these three agents in an award ceremony earlier today. At that event, Gibart was presented with the 12<sup>th</sup> annual U.S. Attorney's Office Law Enforcement Recognition Award, while Khan and Kroells were the first recipients of the Office's Justice Awards.

During the ceremony, U.S. Attorney Jones praised the award recipients, saying, "These three agents have served as the backbone of many of our successful prosecutions. Without tireless work and dedication on the part of investigators, complex fraud cases cannot be prosecuted effectively. These awards are simply one way the U.S. Attorney's Office can let these agents know just how much we appreciate their efforts as well as the efforts of their colleagues. Collectively, they contribute to high-caliber law enforcement work here in Minnesota."

The U.S. Attorney's Office Law Enforcement Award is presented annually to a local, state, or federal law enforcement agent, officer, or investigative team that has performed outstanding work on a significant federal case or on a series of cases. In addition, the recipient or recipients of the award must exemplify the cooperative spirit Minnesotans have come to expect from local, state, and federal law enforcement.

The Justice Award recognizes outstanding achievement in individual civil and criminal cases, wherein agents, officers, or investigative teams have performed above and beyond the normal high standards set for these cases and whose efforts are of a distinctive character.

For his part, Gibart worked on several large mortgage fraud investigations that resulted in successful federal prosecutions, including LHS Mortgage, a fraud involving six defendants and 52 properties; St. Joseph's Financial, a fraud featuring multiple properties and two defendants; Parish Marketing and Development, one of the state's largest mortgage fraud investigations with 10 defendants and more than 200 properties; Sexton Lofts, which involved four defendants and 19 properties; Blackstone Sales and Maine Estates, which featured 250 properties and two defendants; and the Richard Sand and the Ramsey Town Center project, among others. Gibart, who earned a bachelor's degree from Minnesota State University in Mankato in 2003, began his career with the IRS-CID as a co-op student on August 5, 2002, and became a special agent on June 1, 2003. Between June of 2006 and the mid-2010, Gibart's work has focused almost exclusively on mortgage fraud. He has been a part of the Minnesota Federal Mortgage Fraud Task Force since its inception in 2007.

At today's ceremony, Kelly R. Jackson, Special Agent in Charge of the IRS-CID's St. Paul Field Office, said of Gibart, "I congratulate him for being recognized for work related to mortgage fraud and other types of financial fraud cases. Andy's dedication and keen investigative skills exemplify the best in federal law enforcement and are worthy of recognition. Year after year, we count on special agents like Andy to carry on the fight against financial fraud, and his contributions and professionalism are a credit to IRS-CID and to this nation."

Special Agent Jennifer Khan has been a special agent with the FBI for nearly six years and has been assigned to the Minneapolis Field Office since graduating from the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Khan has worked primarily on white-collar investigations with a focus on mortgage fraud in the Twin Cities. She has worked on several investigations that have resulted in successful federal prosecutions, including TJ Waconia, which involved more than 162 properties and six defendants; First Rate Mortgage, a fraud that resulted in more than \$2.3 million in loss caused by five defendants; and Superior Investment, a fraud that led to a loss for mortgage lenders of more than \$43 million tied to three defendants, among others. In addition, Khan has worked in both investment and health care fraud investigations. Prior to becoming a FBI agent, Khan was in the banking industry for approximately ten years. She holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and political science from Minnesota State University-Moorhead.

Following today's award ceremony, Donald E. Oswald, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Minneapolis Field Office, said, "Special Agent Khan is a valued member of the FBI in Minneapolis and is well deserving of this honor."

Postal Inspector Christine Kroells has more than eight years of federal law enforcement experience. In 2003, she started her federal law enforcement career in Seattle, Washington, and then transferred to the St. Paul field office in 2007. As a U.S. Postal Inspector, Kroells has investigated crimes involving mail theft, identity theft, dangerous mail investigations, and mail fraud, including money laundering, mortgage fraud, investment fraud, and consumer fraud. In Minnesota, Kroells has worked on numerous investigations that have resulted in successful federal prosecutions, including TJ Waconia and Superior Investment, among many others. Kroells earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and psychology from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1999 and a law degree from William Mitchell College of Law in 2002.

"I am very proud of Inspector Kroells's selection to be a recipient of this year's U.S. Attorney's Office's Justice Award," said Oscar S. Villanueva, Inspector in Charge for the Denver Division, which also covers the Twin Cities. "This important recognition is a testament to Inspector Kroells's excellent track record as an investigator, and to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's strong commitment to aggressively protect the American public from any attempt to use the U.S. Mail to perpetrate criminal activity."

The award ceremony, which took place at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Minneapolis, was attended by the award recipients, their families and friends, as well as many law enforcement colleagues.

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