

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor  
Newark, New Jersey 07102

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***Ralph J. Marra, Jr., Acting U.S. Attorney***

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***More Information?*** Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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slad0730.rel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2009

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Clifton Woman Admits \$15 Million Ponzi Scheme

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(More)

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NEWARK – The former operator of a Clifton-based real estate investment program pleaded guilty today to operating a Ponzi-scheme in which she raised in excess of \$15 million from hundreds of investors in New Jersey and throughout the United States, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. said.

Marcia Sladich, 51, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden to a one-count Information charging her with mail fraud in connection with the fraudulent real estate scheme Sladich orchestrated and ran from 2004 through December 2007.

Judge Hayden scheduled sentencing for Nov. 24. Sladich remains in custody, where she has been since her arrest last August.

In 2004, Sladich began soliciting investors to invest in a purported real estate investment program. In her plea hearing, Sladich admitted that she told investors that the money they invested would be invested in real estate in the United States and overseas. Sladich also admitted that she promised investors that they would make a 100 percent return on their investment within one year and that their investments would be secure and risk-free.

To induce more investors to provide money, Sladich said she promised existing investors extra money for every new investor they recruited to invest. During her plea hearing, Sladich admitted that contrary to these representations, she did not make real estate investments, but used new investor money to make principal and interest payments to existing investors and to purchase real estate in Florida and Brazil in her name and in the names of her relatives, and pay personal expenses, including the mortgage on her personal residence and personal credit card bills. In total, Sladich raised more than \$15 million from investors during the scheme.

The mail fraud charge to which Sladich pleaded guilty carries a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison and fine of \$250,000 or twice the aggregate loss to any victim or aggregate gain to Sladich. However, under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Sladich faces an actual sentencing range of between 63 and 78 months in federal prison. The Sentencing Guidelines are advisory only, and Judge Hayden has discretion to sentence within or outside of that sentencing range.

Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark, and Postal Inspectors with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Postal Inspector in Charge David L. Collins, with the investigation that resulted in today's guilty plea. Marra also thanked the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, under the direction of George S. Canellos, the Regional Director in New York, for its assistance in the investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Justin W. Arnold of the U.S.

Attorney's Office Securities and Healthcare Fraud unit in Newark.

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Defense Counsel: Joseph Donahue, Esq. - River Edge