



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**FOUR DEFENDANTS CHARGED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
WITH \$3 MILLION MORTGAGE FRAUD SCHEME**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JANICE K. FEDARCYK, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced charges against four defendants in a two-year scheme in which the defendants obtained fraudulent mortgages exceeding \$3 million. SARFRAZ TARIQ and MOHAMMED AZAM CHOUDRY were arrested yesterday morning in New Jersey. SALEEM ALI and SHAHID RASHEED surrendered to authorities yesterday morning, as well. The defendants were presented in Manhattan federal court yesterday afternoon.

According to documents previously filed in Manhattan federal court and the record of the case:

Beginning in 2006, the defendants and their co-conspirators recruited straw buyers to purchase homes belonging to one or more of the co-conspirators. The defendants and their co-conspirators agreed to pay any down payments, the first three months of mortgage payments, and a kickback of \$20,000 per mortgage to the straw buyers. On at least two occasions, the co-conspirators arranged for a straw buyer to purchase properties belonging to the co-conspirators using mortgages that were based on applications that contained false information, including false bank accounts, false personal information, and other false statements. In total, the investigation has uncovered at least nine fraudulently-obtained loans totaling more than \$3 million.

The defendants are charged with conspiring to commit wire fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years.

Mr. BHARARA praised the efforts of the FBI. He added that the investigation is continuing.

This case is being handled by the Office's Organized Crime Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney DANIEL S. GOLDMAN is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment discussed above are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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