



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 11, 2011

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
ELLEN DAVIS,
EDELI RIVERA,
JESSIE ERWIN
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**QUEENS ATTORNEY PLEADS GUILTY IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL
COURT TO PARTICIPATING IN \$23 MILLION MORTGAGE FRAUD
SCHEME**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that CHEDDI GOBERDHAN, a real estate attorney, pleaded guilty yesterday before U.S. District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN in Manhattan federal court to a seven-count Indictment charging him with conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud, and six counts of bank fraud, in connection with a scheme that defrauded banks out of more than \$23 million in home mortgage loans. GOBERDHAN made hundreds of thousands of dollars in illicit profits from the scheme, in which he worked closely with corrupt loan officers of GuyAmerican Funding, a mortgage brokerage firm in Queens, New York. GOBERDHAN is the ninth defendant convicted of participating in this mortgage fraud scheme.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "Cheddi Goberdhan carried out an elaborate subterfuge designed to steal millions of dollars in home mortgage loans. Instead of serving as the gatekeeper whom the banks relied upon to prevent fraud, he abused his position of trust to line his own pockets. We will continue working with our law enforcement partners to prosecute those who commit mortgage fraud and jeopardize the stability of our financial institutions."

According to the Superseding Indictment and statements made during the proceedings in this case:

GOBERDHAN participated in a massive mortgage fraud scheme operated through a branch office of GuyAmerican Funding located on Liberty Avenue, in Jamaica, New York. GOBERDHAN's co-conspirators in the scheme included, among others, the president of GuyAmerican Funding (DAVID RAMNAUTH), GuyAmerican loan officers (PEGGY PERSAUD, ORETTE KILLIKELLY, GEORGE ESSO), individuals who recruited homeowners and "straw buyers" (ELTON

LORD, RAFICK BAKSH, MAHAMOOD HUSSAIN), and another real estate lawyer (RAVI PERSAUD). As part of the scheme, the co-conspirators arranged home sales between "straw buyers" -- persons who posed as home buyers, but who had no intention of living in the mortgaged properties -- and homeowners in financial distress who were willing to sell their homes. The GuyAmerican loan officers obtained mortgage loans for the sham deals by submitting fraudulent applications to banks and lenders, and using fraudulent representations about the supposed buyers' net worth, employment, income, and plans to live in the properties. Frequently, the co-conspirators used the same straw buyer to obtain multiple mortgage loans. The co-conspirators kept some or most of mortgage proceeds for themselves, while the "straw buyers" ultimately defaulted on the mortgages, causing millions in losses to the banks and lenders.

GOBERDHAN acted as the closing attorney and the straw buyers' attorney on numerous mortgage loans originated through GuyAmerican Funding, including loans in which the same straw buyer was used to purchase multiple properties within a short period of time. GOBERDHAN sent false documents to the banks, received the loan money from the banks into his attorney account, and made illicit payments from the sales proceeds to himself and his co-conspirators. GOBERDHAN's wife also owned the title company that was used for many of the transactions, in violation of New York disciplinary rules, which allowed him to further profit from the scheme.

GOBERDHAN, 57, of Elmont, New York, faces a maximum sentence of 210 years in prison. He will also be required to pay restitution to the victims of his offense and to forfeit the proceeds of his crimes. GOBERDHAN is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge SCHEINDLIN on April 13, 2011.

DAVID RAMNAUTH, PEGGY PERSAUD, ORETTE KILLIKELLY, RAJNARINE SINGH, ELTON LORD, and TARAMATEE SINGH previously pled guilty, and RAVI PERSAUD and GEORGE ESSO were convicted after trial. Two charged defendants, RAFICK BAKSH and MAHAMOOD HUSSAIN are fugitives.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA praised the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and thanked it for its assistance in this case.

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This case was part of the coordinated takedown of "Operation Bad Deeds," a joint federal, state, and local law

enforcement operation targeting mortgage fraud crimes, announced on October 15, 2009, in which 41 defendants were charged in various mortgage fraud scams in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and North Carolina.

This case was brought in coordination with President BARACK OBAMA's Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, on which Mr. BHARARA serves as a Co-Chair of the Securities and Commodities Fraud Working Group. President OBAMA established the interagency Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force to wage an aggressive, coordinated, and proactive effort to investigate and prosecute financial crimes. The task force 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, to 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.

The prosecution of the cases arising from "Operation Bad Deeds" is being overseen by the Office's Complex Frauds Unit. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys REBECCA ROHR, NICOLE FRIEDLANDER, and ANTONIA APPS.

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