1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	E. KATE PATCHEN (NYRN 4104634) DAVID J. WARD (CSBN 239504) ALBERT B. SAMBAT (CSBN 236472) MANISH KUMAR (CSBN 269493) U.S. Department of Justice Antitrust Division 450 Golden Gate Avenue Box 36046, Room 10-0101 San Francisco, CA 94102 Telephone: (415) 934-5300 kate.patchen@usdoj.gov  Attorneys for the United States	NOV 1 9 2014  PICHAPID WIEKING OLEN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  JST					
10	UNITED STATES I	DISTRICT COURT					
11	NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA						
12	OAKLAND	CDON 14 581					
13 14	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	) No.					
15 16 17 18	v. JOHN SHIELLS, and MIGUEL DE SANZ, Defendants.	VIOLATIONS: 15 U.S.C. § 1 – Bid Rigging (Counts One, Four & Seven); 18 U.S.C. § 1341 – Mail Fraud (Counts Two, Three, Five, Six, Eight, Nine, & Ten); 18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C), 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c) – Forfeiture					
20		)					
22	INDICT	MENT					
23	The Grand Jury charges that:						
24	BACKGROUND						
25	1. At all times relevant to this Indictment, when California homeowners defaulted or						
26	their mortgages, mortgage holders could institute foreclosure proceedings and sell the properties						
27 28	through non-judicial public real estate foreclosur- auctions were governed by California Civil Code						
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appointed to oversee the public auctions. These public auctions usually took place at or near the courthouse of the county in which the properties were located. The auctioneer, acting on behalf of the trustee, sold the property to the bidder offering the highest purchase price. Proceeds from the sale were then used to pay the mortgage holders, other holders of debt secured by the property, and, in some cases, the defaulting homeowner (collectively "beneficiaries").

- During the period covered by this Indictment, defendant JOHN SHIELLS was a bidder at and purchased real estate at public auctions in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties, California.
- 3. During the period covered by this Indictment, defendant MIGUEL DE SANZ was a bidder at and purchased real estate at public auctions in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties, California.

# **COUNT ONE:** 15 U.S.C. § 1 – Bid Rigging (Alameda County)

- 4. The following individuals are hereby indicted and made defendants on the charge contained in Count One below:
  - a. JOHN SHIELLS; and
  - b. MIGUEL DE SANZ.

#### THE COMBINATION AND CONSPIRACY

- 5. Paragraphs 1 through 3 of this Indictment are re-alleged and incorporated herein as if fully set forth in this Count.
- 6. Beginning as early as June 2007 and continuing until in or about January 2011, the exact dates being unknown to the Grand Jury, the defendants, JOHN SHIELLS and MIGUEL DE SANZ, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, entered into and engaged in a combination and conspiracy to suppress and restrain competition by rigging bids to obtain hundreds of selected properties offered at public auctions in Alameda County in the Northern District of California, in unreasonable restraint of interstate trade and commerce, in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, Title 15, United States Code.
- 7. The charged combination and conspiracy consisted of a continuing agreement, understanding, and concert of action among the defendants and co-conspirators to suppress

competition by refraining from and stopping bidding against each other to purchase hundreds of selected properties at public auctions in Alameda County at non-competitive prices.

#### **MEANS AND METHODS**

- 8. For the purpose of forming and carrying out the charged combination and conspiracy, the defendants and co-conspirators did those things that they combined and conspired to do, including, among other things:
  - a. agreeing not to compete to purchase selected properties at public auctions;
  - b. designating which conspirators would win selected properties at public auctions;
  - c. refraining from and stopping bidding for selected properties at public auctions;
  - d. purchasing selected properties at public auctions at artificially suppressed prices;
  - e. negotiating, making, and receiving payoffs for agreeing not to compete with co-conspirators; and
  - f. holding second, private auctions, known as "rounds," to determine the payoff amounts and the conspirators who would be awarded the selected properties.
- 9. Various entities and individuals, not made defendants in this Count, participated as co-conspirators in the offense charged and performed acts and made statements in furtherance thereof.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE

10. The public auctions and the business activities of the defendants and coconspirators that are the subject of this Count were within the continuous and uninterrupted flow of, and substantially affected, interstate trade and commerce. For example, during the period covered by this Count:

- substantial proceeds from the sale of properties purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy were transmitted from locations in one state to certain beneficiaries located in other states;
- instructions regarding the terms of sale of properties that would be
  purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy were
  transmitted and communicated by certain beneficiaries located in one state
  to trustees located in other states;
- c. paperwork related to the sale of properties purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy was sent by trustees located in one state to certain beneficiaries located in other states, notifying them of the sale of properties in which the beneficiaries held an interest; and
- d. beneficiaries included companies that operated in interstate commerce.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

11. The combination and conspiracy charged in this Count was carried out, in part, in the Northern District of California, within the five years preceding the return of this Indictment.

ALL IN VIOLATION OF TITLE 15, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1.

# COUNTS TWO AND THREE: Mail Fraud 18 U.S.C. § 1341 (Alameda County)

The Grand Jury further charges that:

#### SCHEME TO DEFRAUD

- 12. Paragraphs 1 through 3 of this Indictment are re-alleged and incorporated herein as if fully set forth in these Counts.
- 13. Beginning as early as June 2007 and continuing until in or about January 2011, the exact dates being unknown to the Grand Jury, in Alameda County in the Northern District of California, the defendants, JOHN SHIELLS and MIGUEL DE SANZ, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, did knowingly and with intent to defraud, devise and participate in a scheme and artifice to defraud beneficiaries and to obtain money and property from beneficiaries by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and, for

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purposes of executing such scheme, did use and knowingly cause to be used the United States mail and private or commercial interstate carriers.

14. The purpose of the scheme was to fraudulently acquire title to hundreds of selected properties sold at public auctions in Alameda County and to divert money to coschemers that would have gone to beneficiaries.

# MEANS AND METHODS OF THE SCHEME TO DEFRAUD

- 15. For the purpose of forming and carrying out the charged scheme to defraud, the defendants and co-schemers did those things that they schemed to do, including, among other things:
  - holding second, private auctions, known as "rounds," to determine payoff a. amounts and the schemers who would be awarded the selected properties;
  - b. making and causing to be made materially false and misleading statements that trustees relied upon to distribute proceeds to beneficiaries and to convey title to selected properties;
  - paying co-schemers monies that otherwise would have gone to C. beneficiaries:
  - d. concealing rounds and payoffs from trustees and beneficiaries; and
  - causing the suppressed purchase prices to be reported and paid to beneficiaries.

## USE OF THE MAILS

- 16. In order to execute the scheme and artifice to defraud, the defendants and coschemers knowingly used and caused to be used the United States Postal Service and private or commercial interstate carriers.
- On or about the dates and with respect to the individual defendants specified as to 17. each count set forth below, the defendants and co-schemers did knowingly cause to be delivered by United States mail and private or commercial carriers, including the United States Postal Service, United Parcel Service, and FedEx, the items identified in each Count below:

Count	Defendants	Approx. Date	To	From	Description
2	JOHN SHIELLS, MIGUEL DE SANZ	5/17/2010	3075 Prospect Park, Ste. 100, Rancho Cordova, California	Lender Processing Services, Inc.	Purchase Money and Auction Paperwork for 499 Estudillo Avenue, #104, San Leandro, California
3	JOHN SHIELLS, MIGUEL DE SANZ	6/2/2010	22538 Mission Blvd., Hayward, California	California Reconveyance Company	Trustee's Deed Upon Sale for 1007 41 <sup>st</sup> Street, #323, Emeryville, California

# JURISDICTION AND VENUE

18. The scheme and artifice to defraud charged in these Counts was carried out, in part, in the Northern District of California, within the five years preceding the return of this Indictment.

ALL IN VIOLATION OF TITLE 18, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1341.

# **COUNT FOUR:** 15 U.S.C. § 1 – Bid Rigging (Contra Costa County)

- 19. The following individuals are hereby indicted and made defendants on the charge contained in Count Four below:
  - a. JOHN SHIELLS; and
  - b. MIGUEL DE SANZ.

#### THE COMBINATION AND CONSPIRACY

- 20. Paragraphs 1 through 3 of this Indictment are re-alleged and incorporated herein as if fully set forth in this Count.
- 21. Beginning as early as July 2008 and continuing until in or about January 2011, the exact dates being unknown to the Grand Jury, the defendants, JOHN SHIELLS and MIGUEL DE SANZ, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, entered into and engaged in a combination and conspiracy to suppress and restrain competition by rigging bids to obtain hundreds of selected properties offered at public auctions in Contra Costa County in the Northern District of California, in unreasonable restraint of interstate trade and commerce, in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, Title 15, United States Code.

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22. The charged combination and conspiracy consisted of a continuing agreement, understanding, and concert of action among the defendants and co-conspirators to suppress competition by refraining from and stopping bidding against each other to purchase hundreds of selected properties at public auctions in Contra Costa County at non-competitive prices.

# **MEANS AND METHODS**

- 23. For the purpose of forming and carrying out the charged combination and conspiracy, the defendants and co-conspirators did those things that they combined and conspired to do, including, among other things:
  - a. agreeing not to compete to purchase selected properties at public auctions;
  - designating which conspirators would win selected properties at public auctions;
  - refraining from and stopping bidding for selected properties at public auctions;
  - d. purchasing selected properties at public auctions at artificially suppressed prices;
  - e. negotiating, making, and receiving payoffs for agreeing not to compete with co-conspirators; and
  - f. holding second, private auctions, known as "rounds," to determine the payoff amounts and the conspirators who would be awarded the selected properties.
- 24. Various entities and individuals, not made defendants in this Count, participated as co-conspirators in the offense charged and performed acts and made statements in furtherance thereof.

#### TRADE AND COMMERCE

25. The public auctions and the business activities of the defendants and coconspirators that are the subject of this Count were within the continuous and uninterrupted flow of, and substantially affected, interstate trade and commerce. For example, during the period covered by this Count:

- substantial proceeds from the sale of properties purchased by the
   conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy were transmitted from
   locations in one state to certain beneficiaries located in other states;
- instructions regarding the terms of sale of properties that would be
  purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy were
  transmitted and communicated by certain beneficiaries located in one state
  to trustees located in other states;
- c. paperwork related to the sale of properties purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy was sent by trustees located in one state to certain beneficiaries located in other states, notifying them of the sale of properties in which the beneficiaries held an interest; and
- d. beneficiaries included companies that operated in interstate commerce.

# JURISDICTION AND VENUE

26. The combination and conspiracy charged in this Count was carried out, in part, in the Northern District of California, within the five years preceding the return of this Indictment.

ALL IN VIOLATION OF TITLE 15, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1.

#### COUNTS FIVE AND SIX: 18 U.S.C. § 1341 Mail Fraud (Contra Costa County)

The Grand Jury further charges that:

#### SCHEME TO DEFRAUD

- 27. Paragraphs 1 through 3 of this Indictment are re-alleged and incorporated herein as if fully set forth in these Counts.
- 28. Beginning as early as July 2008 and continuing until in or about January 2011, the exact dates being unknown to the Grand Jury, in Contra Costa County in the Northern District of California, the defendants, JOHN SHIELLS and MIGUEL DE SANZ, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, did knowingly and with intent to defraud, devise and participate in a scheme and artifice to defraud beneficiaries and to obtain money and property from beneficiaries by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and, for

purposes of executing such scheme, did use and knowingly cause to be used the United States mail and private or commercial interstate carriers.

29. The purpose of the scheme was to fraudulently acquire title to hundreds of selected properties sold at public auctions in Contra Costa County and to divert money to coschemers that would have gone to beneficiaries.

#### MEANS AND METHODS OF THE SCHEME TO DEFRAUD

- 30. For the purpose of forming and carrying out the charged scheme to defraud, the defendants and co-schemers did those things that they schemed to do, including, among other things:
  - a. holding second, private auctions, known as "rounds," to determine payoff amounts and the schemers who would be awarded the selected properties;
  - making and causing to be made materially false and misleading statements
    that trustees relied upon to distribute proceeds to beneficiaries and to
    convey title to selected properties;
  - c. paying co-schemers monies that otherwise would have gone to beneficiaries;
  - d. concealing rounds and payoffs from trustees and beneficiaries; and
  - e. causing the suppressed purchase prices to be reported and paid to beneficiaries.

#### **USE OF THE MAILS**

- 31. In order to execute the scheme and artifice to defraud, the defendants and coschemers knowingly used and caused to be used the United States Postal Service and private or commercial interstate carriers.
- 32. On or about the dates and with respect to the individual defendants specified as to each count set forth below, the defendants and co-schemers did knowingly cause to be delivered by United States mail and private or commercial carriers, including the United States Postal Service, United Parcel Service, and FedEx, the items identified in each Count below:

Count	Defendants	Approx. Date	To	From	Description
5	JOHN SHIELLS, MIGUEL DE SANZ	11/30/2009	22538 Mission Blvd., Hayward, California	NDEX West, L.L.C.	Trustee's Deed Upon Sale for 121 Poplar Court, Hercules, California
6	JOHN SHIELLS, MIGUEL DE SANZ	12/22/2009	22538 Mission Blvd., Hayward, California	California Reconveyance Company	Trustee's Deed Upon Sale for 2472 Millstream Lane, San Ramon, California

# JURISDICTION AND VENUE

33. The scheme and artifice to defraud charged in these Counts was carried out, in part, in the Northern District of California, within the five years preceding the return of this Indictment.

ALL IN VIOLATION OF TITLE 18, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1341.

# **<u>COUNT SEVEN</u>**: 15 U.S.C. § 1 – Bid Rigging (San Francisco County)

The Grand Jury further charges that:

- 34. The following individuals are hereby indicted and made defendants on the charges stated in Count Seven below:
  - a. JOHN SHIELLS; and
  - b. MIGUEL DE SANZ.

#### THE COMBINATION AND CONSPIRACY

- 35. Paragraphs 1 through 3 of this Indictment are re-alleged and incorporated herein as if fully set forth in this Count.
- 36. Beginning as early as November 2008 and continuing until in or about January 2011, the exact dates being unknown to the Grand Jury, the defendants, JOHN SHIELLS and MIGUEL DE SANZ, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, entered into and engaged in a combination and conspiracy to suppress and restrain competition by rigging bids to obtain dozens of selected properties offered at public auctions in San Francisco County in the

Northern District of California, in unreasonable restraint of interstate trade and commerce, in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, Title 15, United States Code.

37. The charged combination and conspiracy consisted of a continuing agreement, understanding, and concert of action among the defendants and co-conspirators to suppress competition by refraining from and stopping bidding against each other to purchase dozens of selected properties at public auctions in San Francisco County at non-competitive prices.

# **MEANS AND METHODS**

- 38. For the purpose of forming and carrying out the charged combination and conspiracy, the defendants and co-conspirators did those things that they combined and conspired to do, including, among other things:
  - a. agreeing not to compete or to stop competing to purchase selected
     properties at public auctions in returns for payoffs;
  - designating which conspirators would win selected properties at public auctions;
  - c. refraining from or stopping bidding for selected properties at public auctions; and,
  - d. purchasing selected properties at public auctions at artificially suppressed prices.
- 39. Various entities and individuals, not made defendants in this Count, participated as co-conspirators in the offense charged and performed acts and made statements in furtherance thereof.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE

40. The public auctions and the business activities of the defendants and coconspirators that are the subject of this Count were within the continuous and uninterrupted flow of, and substantially affected, interstate trade and commerce. For example, during the period covered by this Count:

- substantial proceeds from the sale of properties purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy were transmitted from locations in one state to certain beneficiaries located in other states;
- instructions regarding the terms of sale of properties that would be
  purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy
  were transmitted and communicated by certain beneficiaries located in one
  state to trustees located in other states;
- c. paperwork related to the sale of properties purchased by the conspirators pursuant to the bid-rigging conspiracy was sent by trustees located in one state to certain beneficiaries located in other states, notifying them of the sale of properties in which the beneficiaries held an interest; and
- d. beneficiaries included companies that operated in interstate commerce.

# JURISDICTION AND VENUE

41. The combination and conspiracy charged in this Count was carried out, in part, in the Northern District of California, within the five years preceding the return of this Indictment.

ALL IN VIOLATION OF TITLE 15, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1.

# COUNTS EIGHT THROUGH TEN: 18 U.S.C. § 1341 – Mail Fraud (San Francisco County)

The Grand Jury further charges that:

#### SCHEME TO DEFRAUD

- 42. Paragraphs 1 through 3 of this Indictment are re-alleged and incorporated herein as if fully set forth in these Counts.
- 43. Beginning as early as November 2008 and continuing until on or about January 11, 2011, the exact dates being unknown to the Grand Jury, in San Francisco County in the Northern District of California, the defendants, JOHN SHIELLS and MIGUEL DE SANZ, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, did knowingly and with intent to defraud, devise and participate in a scheme and artifice to defraud beneficiaries and to obtain money and property from beneficiaries by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses,

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representations, and promises, and for purposes of executing such scheme, did use and knowingly cause to be used the United States mail and private or commercial interstate carriers.

44. The purpose of the scheme was to fraudulently acquire title to dozens of selected properties sold at public auctions in San Francisco County and to divert money to co-schemers that would have gone to beneficiaries.

# MEANS AND METHODS OF THE SCHEME TO DEFRAUD

- 45. For the purpose of forming and carrying out the charged scheme to defraud, the defendants and co-schemers did those things that they schemed to do, including, among other things:
  - paying co-schemers monies that otherwise would have gone to beneficiaries;
  - taking steps to conceal the fact that monies were diverted from beneficiaries to co-schemers;
  - making and causing to be made materially false and misleading statements
    that trustees relied upon to distribute proceeds to beneficiaries and to
    convey title to selected properties; and
  - d. causing the suppressed purchase prices to be reported and paid to beneficiaries.

#### USE OF THE MAILS

- 46. In order to execute the scheme and artifice to defraud, the defendants and coschemers knowingly used and caused to be used the United States Postal Service and private or commercial interstate carriers.
- 47. On or about the dates and with respect to the individual defendants specified as to each count set forth below, the defendants and co-schemers did knowingly cause to be delivered by United States mail and private or commercial carriers, including the United States Postal Service, United Parcel Service, and FedEx, the items identified in each Count below:

Count	Defendants	Approx. Date	То	From	Description
8	JOHN SHIELLS, MIGUEL DE SANZ	1/15/2010	22538 Mission Blvd., Hayward, California	California Reconveyance Company	Trustee's Deed Upon Sale for 609 Excelsior Avenue, San Francisco, California
9	JOHN SHIELLS, MIGUEL DE SANZ	2/25/2010	2300 Bridgeway, Sausalito, California	T.D. Service Company	Trustee's Deed Upon Sale for 842 Peru Street, San Francisco, California
10	JOHN SHIELLS, MIGUEL DE SANZ	5/19/2010	22538 Mission Blvd., Hayward, California	Regional Trustee Services Corp.	Trustee's Deed Upon Sale for 80 Collingwood Street, #302, San Francisco, California

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

48. The scheme and artifice to defraud charged in these Counts was carried out, in part, in the Northern District of California, within the five years preceding the return of this Indictment.

ALL IN VIOLATION OF TITLE 18, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1341.

# **FORFEITURE ALLEGATION:** 18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C) and 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c)

- 49. Paragraphs 1 through 3, paragraphs 12 through 18, paragraphs 27 through 33, and paragraphs 42 through 48 are hereby re-alleged as if fully set forth herein for the purpose of alleging forfeiture pursuant to the provisions of Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c).
- 50. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), upon conviction of the offenses alleged in Counts Two, Three, Five, Six, Eight, Nine, and Ten of this Indictment, each defendant so convicted shall be jointly and severally liable to forfeit to the United States any property constituting, or derived from, proceeds obtained directly or indirectly from the scheme and artifice to defraud alleged in said Counts.

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1 51. If, as a result of any act or omission of the defendants, any of said property: 2 a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence; 3 b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party; 4 c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the Court; 5 has been substantially diminished in value; or d. has been commingled with other property that cannot be divided 6 e. 7 without difficulty, 8 any and all interest that the defendants have in any other property, up to the value of the property 9 described in Paragraph 50, above, shall be forfeited to the United States pursuant to Title 21, 10 United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by Title 28, United States Code, Section 11 2461(c). 12 Dated: //-/9-20/4 A TRUE BILL. 13 14 15 16 FOREPERSON Brent Snyder Deputy Assistant Attorney General 17 18 19 20 Marc Siegel Marvin N. Price Director of Criminal Enforcement Chief, San Francisco Office 21 United States Department of Justice Antitrust Division 22 23 24 E. Kate Patchen, Assistant Chief 25 Attorney for the United States David J. Ward, Trial Attorney 26 Northern District of California Albert B. Sambat, Trial Attorney Acting Under Authority Conferred Manish Kumar, Trial Attorney 27

United States Department of Justice

Antitrust Division |

by 28 U.S.C. § 515