

## Press Release

### MORTGAGE BROKER PLEADS GUILTY TO FILING FALSE TAX RETURNS

January 19, 2011

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wifredo A. Ferrer United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Daniel W. Auer, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, and J. Thomas Cardwell, Commissioner, State of Florida Office of Financial Regulation, announced the January 14, 2011 guilty plea of defendant **John Sarji**, 68, of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Sarji pled guilty to one count of filing a false tax return, in violation of Title 26, United States Code, Section 7206(1). Sentencing has been scheduled for March 25, 2011 before U.S. District Court Judge James I. Cohn in Ft. Lauderdale. At sentencing, Sarji faces a maximum of 3 years in prison and mandatory restitution for the taxes owed to the Treasury.

According to the charging document and statements made in court, on or about March 21, 2007, Sarji, a licensed mortgage broker and employee of A-1 Capital Funding, Inc., knowingly filed a false 2006 IRS Form 1040 U.S. Individual Tax Return. Sarji failed to report a total of \$469,600 in kickback payments that he had earned pursuant to an illegal Marketing Representative Agreement with TurnKey Title. The payments violated both Florida law and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) in that the agreement constituted an illegal referral fee or kickback involving federally regulated mortgage loans. Specifically, in tax year 2006, John Sarji failed to report \$173,600 in income earned from his relationship TurnKey Title.

Mr. Ferrer commended the investigative efforts of the Internal Revenue Service and the State of Florida Office of Financial Regulation. This case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Marc Anton.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

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