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# **NEWS RELEASE**

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**Fifteen Arrest Warrants Issued in House Stealing Cases Based on Grand Jury Presentment**

*More than 80 Properties Illegally Sold Victimizing Legal Homeowners and Unsuspecting Buyers*

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February 11, 2009---- District Attorney Lynne Abraham today announced that arrest warrants have been issued for fifteen people for engaging in a continuing conspiratorial and criminal enterprise to steal homes, engage in Forgery, Perjury, Record Tampering and Thefts, among other crimes. This investigation began in 2004. Upon finding a massive conspiracy between the named suspects, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office petitioned the supervising judge of the Grand Jury to have this matter brought before the Grand Jury.

The Grand Jury investigation revealed that generally, this ring forged and recorded deeds to abandoned or otherwise uninhabited properties, transferring these properties from their true and rightful owners to codefendants, or fictitious person, and then "sold" these properties to unsuspecting victims. In addition, the ring forged multiple copies of the same Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia "Entry Authorization" paperwork with

the same file number for multiple properties, which purportedly gave some "homebuyers" the right to enter these premises while they waited for the deeds, which almost never came. In each case of fraud, the lawful owner was totally unaware, and never consented to the "sale" of his property. In many instances the true and lawful owners of the property were dead for a number of years. Often the conspiratorial ring targeted immigrant, non-English speaking citizens specifically because of the lack of sophistication with the laws and procedures of the transfer of property in this state.

In addition, our investigation revealed how this criminal enterprise exploited the recording process for deeds in Philadelphia to commit fraud. The group used public records regarding past and current property ownership and manipulated the recording process governed by state law which mandates that the Recorder of Deeds record deeds first, after meeting several minimal requirements, then check later to see if everything is lawful and proper about the transfer. Thus the law puts the cart before the horse and practically guarantees that house stealing will continue to flourish in Philadelphia and across this Commonwealth. This is particularly acute in our city because there are many more houses than people who live in them due to the tremendous shrinkage of our population. Thus, state law mandates that even fraudulent, forged or inaccurate deeds must be recorded immediately, as long as it appears that on the document's face all appears in order.

Our investigation also demonstrated that the lack of requirements and laws governing Notaries Public, and the ease with which Notaries, and ring leaders, Carlos Quiles, Ivan Delgado, and accomplices and co-conspirators, Lenora Irene Jackson (Evans) and Rebecca A. Robinson had in committing these crimes because no one seriously enforces State laws requiring the person who sells a property to appear in person before the Notary Public. Moreover, State Law does not mandate that the Notary keep a thumbprint or photo identification presented to them with the paperwork they are required to keep should an investigation be commenced. This allows the Notary "not to

remember" the person who appeared before them due to the heavy volume of people needing a Notary's services. In this case, some of the Notaries didn't keep required logs, and, of course, didn't care if the signatures were known forgeries.

This criminal enterprise was able to pull off these multiple scams, because the perpetrators were familiar fixtures in the neighborhoods where the frauds were perpetrated. One was a Reverend, who sometimes elevated his position to Bishop, one Kenneth Lyons. One, Troy Baylor, claimed to be a City of Philadelphia employee, or an employee of a now-former State Representative. Some joined well-known organizations like Men United for a Better Philadelphia to give them an air of legitimacy. Both sides of these cases have suffered immeasurably, the families who paid cash for "buying" what they never owned and spending more money for rehabilitation of the properties, and the rightful home owners who had to hire attorneys to get their rightful property returned to them.

The Presentment acknowledged the importance that this type of property plays in the lives of individuals and the fabric of our communities and charged Carlos Quiles, Ivan Delgado, Troy Baylor, Richard Smith, Kenneth Lyons, Lenora Irene Jackson, Rebecca A. Robinson, Tyrone Davenport, Juanita Torres, Alberto Rodriguez, Daralease Brown, Vincent Wilder, David Lespier, Maria Roman, Zoraida Cuevas and Marino Rodriguez with numerous counts of:

- 1) Corrupt Organizations, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §911 ( F-1);
- 2) Criminal Conspiracy, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §903 (F-3);
- 3) Theft by Unlawful Taking or Disposition, Pa.C.S.A. §3921 (F-3);
- 4) Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §3922 (F-3);
- 5) Forgery, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4101 (F-3);
- 6) Perjury, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4902 (F-3);
- 7) Burglary, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §3502 (F-1);
- 8) Criminal Trespass, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §3503 (F-2 );

- 9) Tampering with Records or Identification, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4104 (M-1);
- 10) Securing Execution of Documents by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4114 (M-2); and
- 11) Tampering with Public Records or Information, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4911 (F-3).

The Grand Jury found that the criminal ring was responsible for the fraudulent conveyance of the following properties:

- 5411 N 3<sup>RD</sup> Street
- 3036 Tulip Street
- 3135 Weikel Street
- 3525 Jasper Street
- 951 E Westmoreland Street
- 3103 Emerald Street
- 1827 E Madison Street
- 2265 E. Ontario Street
- 2309 E Somerset Street
- 2442 E. Harold Street
- 1947 Mascher Street
- 2966 N. Tulip Street
- 331 W. Thompson Street
- 146 W. Palmer Street
- 2316 N. 10<sup>TH</sup> Street
- 4401 N. 9<sup>TH</sup> Street
- 2070 E. Stella Street
- 3882 Glendale Avenue
- 928 W. Susquehanna Avenue
- 4312 Waln Street
- 3143 Rorer Street

4248 Penn Street  
4773 Loring Street  
1708 Church Street  
4809 Darrah Street  
4362 Paul Street  
4708 Darrah Street  
1640 Allengrove Street  
1927 Berkshire Street  
1933 Berkshire Street  
1814 Gillingham Street  
4561 Mulberry Street  
1820 Harrison Street  
1813 Foulkrod Street  
4324 & 4326 Paul Street  
969 E. Price Street  
918 East Chelten Avenue  
2305 N. 10<sup>TH</sup> Street  
1831 N. Croskey Street  
1945 Elston Street  
2008 W. Oxford Street  
2461 W. York Street  
2330 N 17<sup>TH</sup> Street  
4720 Whitaker Avenue  
226 E Roosevelt Boulevard  
1729 N. Marston Street  
138 E Wyoming Avenue

2217 W. Dauphin Street  
2419 N. Patton Street  
418 N. Salford Street  
5227 McKean Avenue  
2425 N. Clarion Street  
2908 N. 7<sup>TH</sup> Street  
2257 N. 17<sup>TH</sup> Street  
2404 N. Clarion Street  
4859 N. 9<sup>TH</sup> Street  
2015 W. Oxford Street  
2526 N. 32<sup>ND</sup> Street  
2313 N. 17<sup>TH</sup> Street  
2254 N. Sydenham Street  
2325 N. 17<sup>TH</sup> Street  
2335 N. 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
2214 N. Sydenham Street  
1739 Wellington Street  
2030 W. Oxford Street  
1715 Edgley Street  
1620 Edgley Street  
2120 N. 17<sup>TH</sup> Street  
1913 W. Norris Street  
2023 N. 16<sup>TH</sup> Street  
1609 W. Diamond Street  
1752 N. Dover Street  
2330 N. 19<sup>TH</sup> Street  
2462 N. Patton Street

2337 N. Patton Street

2441 N. Patton Street

2447 N. Patton Street

2626 N. 17<sup>TH</sup> Street

2149 N. Franklin Street

4937 Rosehill Street

2455 N. Patton Street

5238 N. 9<sup>TH</sup> Street

The Economic and Cyber Crime Unit of the District Attorney's Office conducted the investigation, led by Assistant District Attorney Heather Young, Police Officer Patricia Wong and Detective David Budka.