



Memorandum



Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General
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To: The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
The Honorable Rebeca Sosa, Chairwoman
Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Patra Liu, Interim Inspector General

Date: May 10, 2013

Subject: First of Four Defendants Sentenced in the Miami-Dade County Short Sales Scam;
IG10-54

Zoraida Abreu (Abreu), who was arrested in February 2012 with three other co-defendants, pled guilty today for her part in a real estate scam that snared 15 victims and defrauded them of over \$2.4 million. Abreu pled guilty to eight felony charges that included Racketeering, First Degree Grand Theft, and Second Degree Grand Theft. Abreu was sentenced to 15 years probation. Her sentence includes cooperation with prosecutors in the continuing prosecution of her three co-defendants. She will also be responsible for making restitution payments and paying costs of investigation.

In a joint investigation with the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) and the State Attorney's Office, the Office of the Inspector General uncovered a scheme that used a Florida corporation – called Miami-Dade County Short Sales, Inc. – to lure victims into believing that they were getting rock bottom prices on real estate. In one scheme, the victims were falsely led to believe that the defendants were in collusion with a county employee who could facilitate the pre-sale of a delinquent property prior to the scheduled public auction to satisfy the tax certificate holders. It was false that a county employee was involved in the tax deed scheme. In another scheme, the defendants lured buyers into believing that they were purchasing lucrative short sale properties. Neither the defendants nor their company had the legal authority to sell any of the properties they purported to broker. For both schemes, victim losses ranged from \$6,000 to over \$500,000, for total losses exceeding \$2.4 million.

This investigation was possible due to the collaboration of the MDPD and the assistance of the Miami-Dade County Clerk of the Courts and the Miami-Dade County Tax Collector's Office.

cc: Hon. Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of the Courts, Miami-Dade County
Mr. Ed Marquez, Deputy Mayor, Miami-Dade County
Mr. J.D. Patterson, Director, Miami-Dade Police Department
Mr. Fernando Casamayor, Miami-Dade County Tax Collector
Ms. Cathy Jackson, Director, Audit and Management Services
Mr. Charles Anderson, Commission Auditor