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TASK FORCE ARRESTS GROUP IN MORTGAGE FRAUD SCHEME *Investigation Exposes Fraud at Every Level of the Approval Process*

DEARBORN, Mich. — Investigators from the South Eastern Michigan Financial Crimes Task Force (SEMFACTF) arrested a Dearborn man and six others today as part of an ongoing criminal investigation into a mortgage fraud network alleged to have utilized insiders at every level of the mortgage approval process to defraud a multitude of financial institutions, announced Michigan State Police (MSP) Director Col. Peter C. Munoz and United States Secret Service (USSS) Special Agent in Charge William Callahan.

Investigators from the MSP and USSS SEMFACTF worked alongside prosecutors from the US Attorneys Office and the Michigan Office of Attorney General in a yearlong investigation, which has netted \$1.6 million in seized assets and seven arrests. The leader of the criminal enterprise, EDDIE ZABEN, 39, of Dearborn, paid well-placed co-operatives at every level of the mortgage application process to defraud multiple lending institutions with phony mortgage applications from his place of business, MYA'S INVESTMENTS, of Lincoln Park, Mich. By presenting fraudulent mortgage applications on behalf of straw buyers, ZABEN obtained fraudulent mortgages on eight properties.

“At a time when Michigan’s economy is struggling, these defendants chose to break the law for their own personal gain by falsely manipulating the mortgage process and in some cases stealing identities to do it,” Munoz stated. “Mortgage fraud cases are time-intensive, complex financial investigations that go beyond the resources of any one agency and I commend this cooperative effort between state and federal authorities to aggressively pursue violators.”

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Those arrested for their role in this mortgage fraud criminal enterprise include:

Eddie Zaben, 39, of Dearborn, Mich. -- Criminal Enterprise, 8 counts False Pretense
Dagoberto Reyes, 53, of Detroit, Mich. -- Identity Theft, 4 counts False Pretense
Evelyn Santana, 53, of Union City, N.J. -- Identity Theft, 6 counts False Pretense
Mohamed Beydoun, 27, of Detroit, Mich. -- Uttering and Publishing, False Pretense
Memoud Makky, 29, of Dearborn, Mich. -- Uttering and Publishing, False Pretense
Ali Hassan Haidous, 25, of Dearborn, Mich. -- Uttering and Publishing, False Pretense
Balil Hashem, 26, of Dearborn, Mich. -- Uttering and Publishing, False Pretense

The criminal case is being prosecuted by Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox. The asset forfeiture part of this investigation is being pursued by the United States Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan. All defendants were arraigned in the 19th District Court in Dearborn. A conviction for Criminal Enterprise carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison or a \$100,000 fine, or both, and forfeiture of criminal proceeds. A complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt.

The SEMFCTF is a multijurisdictional team that investigates mortgage fraud statewide. It is comprised of investigators from the US Secret Service, Michigan State Police, Michigan Office of Attorney General, US Postal Inspection Service, Small Business Association, Office of Inspector General and the Michigan Office of Financial and Insurance Regulation.

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