

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **DA Seeks Additional Victims of Widespread Foreclosure Scam**

### *Scheme Targeted Members of the San Diego Filipino Community*

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie M. Dumanis](#) today asked for the public's help in locating additional victims of a foreclosure fraud scam which operated in San Diego County from 2007 through 2008 and gained national attention. Victims of the foreclosure scam were falsely told that "land patents" would protect their properties from foreclosure. Many of those solicited by the fraudsters were members of the San Diego Filipino Community.

"The victims in this case were desperate to save their homes from foreclosure," said DA Dumanis. "They were preyed upon by these con artists, who promised help but instead stole their money."

Six defendants have been charged in connection with the case, including the alleged ringleader, Larry Smith, 61. He has been charged with conspiracy to commit grand theft and deceitful practices in acting as a mortgage foreclosure consultant. If convicted, he faces 37 years to life in prison.

Smith and his accomplices who sold the bogus "land patents" to homeowners claimed the victims could pay only 10% of their mortgage payment due each month and could force the lenders to "re-contract" the loan amounts.

Also charged in the conspiracy are Maria Candida Capa, 45; Margarita Gaviola, 47; former managers of At Home Consulting Group, where many of the land patent presentations were pitched, Jessica Refuerzo, 55; Julita Whittingham, 47; and Edgardo Orcino, 57. The group is accused of defrauding homeowners out of more than \$100,000.

More than 20 victims have come forward saying they lost tens of thousands of dollars in the real estate scheme. The District Attorney's investigation is ongoing. A preliminary hearing is currently set for June 15. Anyone who believes they may be a victim in this case is asked to call (619) 531-4475.

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