



Memorandum

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To: The Honorable Carlos Alvarez, Mayor
The Honorable Chairperson Bruno A. Barreiro
and Members, Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of County and Circuit Courts

From: Christopher Mazzella
Inspector General

Date: December 2, 2008

Re: Con-Artist Charged as a Result of OIG Investigation is Sentenced for Stealing Homes

Sameer Muhammad (Muhammad), the subject of an investigation by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), conducted with the assistance of the Miami-Dade Police Department's Elderly Exploitation Unit and the State Attorney's Office, was sentenced today following a jury verdict in mid-October. Muhammad and his accomplice, Carolyn Murphy (Murphy), used forged quit claim and warranty deeds filed at the Miami-Dade County Clerk of the Courts to obtain title to the homes before selling the properties and pocketing the proceeds of the sales. They were charged in June 2005 with Organized Scheme to Defraud, Identity Theft, Grand Theft, Uttering a Forged Instrument and Possession of a False Driver's License. Muhammad and Murphy not only personally profited from their criminal acts but left in their wake family members and the innocent buyers to deal with the legality of clearing the title to the properties.

Murphy, who pled guilty in November 2007 and cooperated with prosecutors, was sentenced in October to 3 years state prison pursuant to her cooperation agreement. Muhammad was sentenced today by the Honorable Judge Bertila Soto to 20 years state prison with a 10 year minimum mandatory sentence followed by 10 years probation. As a special condition of probation, Muhammad was ordered to pay restitution to the victims, costs of prosecution to the State, and costs of investigation to the Office of the Inspector General. Specifically, he has been ordered to pay \$12,546 to the State Attorney's Office, \$10,000 to the OIG, and \$301,546 to the victims of his scams. The Inspector General's Office has over the years conducted successful investigations resulting in the arrests and prosecutions of a number of scam artists targeting homeowners. Our 2007 Annual Report highlights these efforts. We will continue to pursue those that target our disadvantaged citizens. We would also like to acknowledge the response of the Clerk of the Courts to the OIG investigation through its implementation of procedures to help deter future criminal activities.

cc: Mr. George Burgess, County Manager
Ms. Cathy Jackson, Director, Audit & Management Services
Mr. Charles Anderson, Commission Auditor
Clerk of the Board (copy filed)