



GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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REAL ESTATE AGENT PLEADS GUILTY IN MORTGAGE RESCUE FRAUD CASE

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that Sunland resident Juan Carlos Guerra (DOB 5/5/86) has pleaded guilty to one felony count of grand theft. The case was the result of an investigation conducted by the District Attorney's Real Estate Fraud Unit.

The victim, who lives in Simi Valley, sought refinancing assistance from a business called Planet Investment Group. Once at the business, she was directed to the defendant, a licensed real estate agent. The defendant promised to help the victim refinance and save her home. Over the next four years, the defendant or an accomplice telephonically instructed the victim to deposit varying amounts of money into multiple bank accounts. The victim was told these deposits were necessary for her refinancing effort. The investigation, however, revealed the bank accounts were unrelated to the victim's lenders. Two of the accounts were personal bank accounts owned by the defendant. In total, the victim deposited approximately \$44,000 into these accounts. None of the victim's monies were used for her refinancing effort. The victim eventually lost her home.

The District Attorney's Real Estate Fraud Unit secured \$20,000 in victim restitution from the defendant at the time of his plea. He will be sentenced on September 19, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 12 of the Ventura Superior Court, County of Ventura. He faces a maximum of 365 days in the Ventura County jail. He will be ordered to pay the remaining restitution to the victim and be placed on formal probation.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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