

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
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Two Men Sentenced for Real Estate Fraud

San Bernardino, CA - On Friday, July 31, 2009, in Superior Court, Department 24, Howard Edwards and John Foster were sentenced to prison for real estate fraud related crimes. Howard Edwards was sentenced to 20 years, four months and John Foster was sentenced to 10 years, four months. The two defendants were found guilty on felony counts ranging from forgery, grand theft, filing of false instruments, identity theft, conspiracy, and money laundering.

In 2005/06, the two defendants, formerly of Rancho Cucamonga, befriended unsuspecting victims on an Internet chat line. Their personal information was used to obtain loans on luxury cars and real estate in Fontana. The victims were then liable for these loans. The loan proceeds were transferred to a phony escrow company. The defendants falsified several real estate deeds and forged the signatures and stamps of several notary publics. The false deeds were later recorded at the San Bernardino County Recorder's Office.

In July 2007, the defendants sold a house in the city of Gardena, Ca. for an additional \$560,000. The house was sold without the owner's permission and knowledge. The victims first found out about it when a lending institution attempted to foreclose on the property. The rightful owners had been living at the residence since 1971. The defendants utilized the personal information of a man living in Massachusetts to obtain the loans. \$538,000 was transferred to the phony escrow company and later dispersed to the defendants other bank accounts.

Mr. Edwards and Mr. Foster were extradited from Georgia and Illinois, respectively, in 2008. The San Bernardino County District Attorney's Real Estate Fraud Unit investigated and prosecuted this case.

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