

# Mortgage Fraud Arrests Keep Piling Up in Palm Beach County

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Federal and state task forces are working overtime in Palm Beach County. The arrests for mortgage fraud are growing and the jail cells are filling up fast.

In December, Jason Vitulano was arrested for mail and wire fraud. He was charged with falsifying the salaries of loan applicants to obtain huge home mortgages and commissions. He worked for the infamous TopDot Mortgage Company in Boca Raton, which has since been shut down.

Four more people were added to the indictment this week, including a Palm Beach Gardens attorney, a former Boca Raton bank vice president and a man from Jupiter. The men charged are Joseph Miller, 63, a Palm Beach Gardens attorney, Peter Hartofilis, 33, of New York, Robert Hofler, 52, a former vice president of First Southern Bank in Boca Raton and Steve Vento, 41. Vento, from Jupiter, is already in prison on other charges.

Vento is alleged to have submitted two false loan applications to buy two houses worth more than \$1 million each. Miller is alleged to have acted as closing agent and title agent on some of the transactions. The indictment says Hofler signed false verification of deposit forms and more than \$5 million was obtained with the false information between 2006 and 2007.

"Florida has been hit hard by this stuff," said Matthew Lynch, U.S. Secret Service agent-in-charge for West Palm Beach. "It was like the wild, wild west out there."

## Mortgage Fraud in Palm Beach County

[Mortgage fraud](#) has grown drastically over the last few years and counties like Palm Beach County now have Mortgage Fraud Task Forces. There are many different kinds of mortgage fraud; income fraud, employment fraud, failure to disclose liabilities, fraud for profit, appraisal fraud and cash-back schemes. The penalties are severe for all of these charges and the government is aggressively pursuing cases against straw buyers and borrowers, homeowners, investors and appraisers. You can go to prison for up to 30 years and face fines up to \$1,000,000.

## **Palm Beach County Mortgage Fraud Defense**

If you have been charged with mortgage fraud or if you are being investigated for mortgage fraud - or - if you think you are being investigated - it is important to hire a lawyer with mortgage fraud experience immediately. An experienced [Palm Beach County mortgage fraud attorney](#) will review bank statements, mortgage applications and other documents. The attorney will also review the sale and buying history of the property to determine if fraudulent practices occurred before you purchased it. If you are an innocent victim in a larger mortgage fraud scheme, the attorney can have the case dismissed.

The government crackdown on mortgage fraud is in full force. Protect yourself with a good [mortgage fraud attorney](#) as soon as possible.

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