



U. S. Department of Justice

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ORLANDO WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH A RESIDENTIAL LOAN AND MORTGAGE**

**PENSACOLA, FLORIDA** – Chantal M. Lanton, 37, of Orlando, Florida, pled guilty today to two counts of making false statements to a bank in connection with her application for a residential loan and mortgage. Lanton will be sentenced by Chief U.S. District Judge M. Casey Rodgers on August 8, 2013. The guilty plea was announced by Pamela C. Marsh, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida.

Lanton waived her right to be indicted by a federal grand jury and was charged in two-count Information filed today. Count One of the Information alleged that, in March 2005, Lanton applied for a residential loan with Regions Bank, N.A., to purchase a home in Pensacola, Florida. On the loan application, Lanton significantly overstated her income, the extent of her education, and provided false information about her debts. Count Two of the Information alleged that, in February 2011, after her loan lapsed into default, Lanton falsely claimed to be an officer in the United States Air Force who was being deployed to Germany, in an effort to receive foreclosure protection benefits that are provided to service members under the Service Members' Civil Relief Act. Lanton has never served in the U.S. Air Force, or any other branch of the U.S. military. As a result of her guilty plea, Lanton faces a possible sentence of 30 years in prison and a fine of \$1,000,000 on each count.

U. S. Attorney Marsh praised the work of Northwest Florida Mortgage Fraud Task Force and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, in pursuing this investigation. Formed in July 2011, the Northwest Florida Mortgage Fraud Task Force is a partnership of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and is charged with investigating mortgage fraud in the panhandle of Florida.

This prosecution is a continuation of vigorous efforts to combat mortgage fraud as part of Operation Stolen Dreams, a nationwide sweep targeting fraudulent mortgage loans. This national emphasis is the largest collective enforcement effort ever brought to bear in confronting the problem and was initiated by the Mortgage Fraud Working Group of the President's Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, which was established to lead an aggressive, coordinated effort to investigate and prosecute financial crimes.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas P. Swaim.

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