



**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office  
Central District of California

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## **Two California Men Sentenced to Prison for Their Roles in Fake Law Firms That Promised to Help Struggling Homeowners**

LOS ANGELES – Two Orange County, California men were sentenced yesterday in U.S. District Court in Santa Ana, California to serve 41 and 47 months in prison, respectively, for their roles in a multi-million dollar fraudulent mortgage modification scheme posing as a successful law firm, the Justice Department announced.

Ronald Rodis, 52, of Long Beach, California, and Charles Wayne Farris, 56, of Aliso Viejo, California, each previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud. In addition to the terms of prison imposed by U.S. District Judge David O. Carter, Judge Carter ordered Farris to pay \$3,534,927.43 in restitution and ordered Rodis to pay \$3,826,947.95 in restitution.

Both defendants previously admitted that, between October 2008 and June 2009, they participated in a scheme to induce homeowners to pay between \$3,500 and \$5,500 for the services of the Rodis Law Group. These defendants and their co-conspirators made numerous misrepresentations regarding RLG's ability to negotiate loan modifications from the homeowners' mortgage lenders. They hid the involvement of Bryan D'Antonio, the true owner of the scheme. D'Antonio was a convicted felon and subject to a permanent injunction prohibiting him from having any involvement with any business that engaged in telemarketing or misrepresented the services it would provide.

"These defendants played key roles in a scheme that victimized homeowners facing foreclosure during the mortgage crisis," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Chad A. Readler of the Justice Department's Civil Division. "The defendants promised homeowners assistance saving their homes and modifying their mortgages, yet took their money knowing the promised benefits would never be realized."

"These two defendants used their legal knowledge and expertise to coerce and victimize vulnerable homeowners," said Acting U.S. Attorney Sandra R. Brown of the Central District of California. "Rather than help these individuals as promised, their fraudulent scheme cost the victims millions of dollars."

Rodis was a licensed California attorney who allowed his name to be used to lend legitimacy to the scheme. He recorded radio advertisements encouraging struggling homeowners to call RLG. In the ads, Rodis falsely claimed that RLG consisted of “a team of experienced attorneys” who were “highly skilled in negotiating lower interest rates and even lowering your principal balance.” In fact, RLG was a telemarketing operation that never had a team of experienced attorneys and rarely achieved any of the promised results for homeowners. During much of the scheme, Rodis was the only attorney at RLG. After his involvement with the RLG scheme, Rodis surrendered his law license.

Farris supervised a sales force of dozens of telemarketers who fielded calls from struggling homeowners. At Farris’s direction and using scripts that he helped create, the telemarketers made numerous misrepresentations regarding the companies’ ability to negotiate loan modifications from the homeowners’ mortgage lenders. For example, the telemarketers stated that RLG and America’s Law Group – a successor to RLG – had been in business for 11 years when in fact the company had only opened in October 2008. They falsely stated that RLG and ALG routinely obtained positive results for homeowners, including lower monthly payments, reductions in principal balance and lower interest rates. In fact, positive results were rarely achieved for any RLG or ALG clients. Telemarketers also falsely reiterated that homeowners would have a team of attorneys and real estate professionals assigned to their case.

On April 10, Bryan D’Antonio, the leader of the scheme, was sentenced to 97 months in prison followed by 12 months in a halfway house and was ordered to pay \$3,826,977.95 in restitution.

This case was investigated by the FBI Los Angeles Field Office and prosecuted by Trial Attorney John W. Burke of the Civil Division’s Consumer Protection Branch and Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph T. McNally of the Central District of California.