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## **Los Angeles Woman Charged With Fraudulently Recording Millions of Dollars in False Mechanics Liens**

***Ritz Ortiz, 58, faces over 24 years in state prison if convicted as charged***

LOS ANGELES — A Los Angeles woman has been charged with real estate fraud for filing mechanics liens falsely claiming millions of dollars in unpaid contracting work, clouding the titles of ten properties in Beverly Hills and throughout Los Angeles County.

“This is one of the most egregious cases of alleged real estate fraud I have ever seen, with millions of dollars in false liens recorded against homeowners,” Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan J. Hochman said. “The homeowner victims in this case cannot sell their property until these liens are cleared. Our Real Estate Fraud Division will do everything in our power to seek justice for these individuals. Once convicted, we will additionally seek a court order to clear title for all who have been victimized by the defendant.”

Rita Cedeno Ortiz (dob 3/6/67) is charged in case 26CJCF01311 with 25 felony counts of knowingly causing a false instrument to be recorded in a public office. It is further alleged that Ortiz engaged in a pattern of fraudulent conduct resulting in losses of over \$500,000.

The instruments recorded at the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder’s Office consist of 24 "Claim of Mechanics Lien" and one "Grant Deed" filed against 10 properties. The liens falsely claim that Ortiz is owed payments in amounts ranging from \$800,000 to over \$98 million.

Ortiz was arraigned on March 2 and pleaded not guilty. Her bail was set by the Court at \$700,000. A preliminary hearing is set for March 12 in Department 31 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

Ortiz faces 24 years in state prison if convicted as charged.

The case is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney June Miyagishima of the Real Estate Fraud Section of the White Collar Crime Division and investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department's Commercial Crimes Division's Real Estate Fraud Unit.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is asked to call the LAPD Commercial Crimes Division at (213) 486-6620. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous should call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (800-222-8477) or text 274637 (C-R-I-M-E-S). All text messages should begin with the letters "LAPD." Tipsters may also go to [LAPDOnline.org](http://LAPDOnline.org), click on "webtips."