



# Maricopa County Attorney

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## **This Just in from the Maricopa County Attorney's Office.....**

March 5, 2010

County Attorney Andrew Thomas announced today the fraud conviction of a man accused of 'home stripping' in which fixtures are illegally removed from a home in foreclosure. This is the first conviction in Maricopa County involving a 'home stripping' case.

In April of 2009 Kailash Bhatt (DOB 2/10/66) put out an ad on Craigslist advertising kitchen cabinets, granite countertops, a double oven, microwave, and a dishwasher for sale. Those fixtures were inside an Anthem house that was in foreclosure.

According to the FBI, Bhatt, who was a real estate agent, was arrested after he accepted \$2,000 from an undercover Mortgage Task Force agent. Bhatt intended to sell the items from the home in violation of the contract he had signed with the mortgage company that initiated the foreclosure of the property. The home was an investment property and not his residence.

On March 4, 2010 Bhatt was convicted of Defrauding Secured Creditors following a five day trial. He'll be sentenced on April 1, 2010. Deputy County Attorney Karen Pugh prosecuted the case.

Thomas stated, "Home stripping devalues neighborhoods, creates blight, and it's illegal. This practice makes worse a struggling real estate market."

**If you have any questions please contact Mike Anthony Scerbo at  
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