

6th March 2007

ASSETS RECOVERY AGENCY FREEZES OVER £300,000 IN MORTGAGE FRAUD AND CONTRABAND CIGARETTE CASE

The Assets Recovery Agency has been granted a Property Freezing Order over assets estimated to be worth in the region of £312,500 held by Mr Rimas Butkus, Ms Dangira Jankauskaite and Ms Neringa Jankauskaite.

The Agency contends that the respondents acquired expensive cars and seven properties in the E16 area of London with funds that are incompatible with their legitimate income. The Agency's case is that mortgages have been obtained using false documents and that contraband cigarettes have been sold thus evading excise duty. Mr Butkus is on remand in Lithuania and is awaiting trial for aggravated burglary. He has a criminal record in Lithuania that includes theft.

The case was referred to the Agency by the Metropolitan Police who arrested Mr Butkus as a result of a European arrest warrant. He was subsequently extradited to Lithuania on 22 June 2006. The Agency executed a number of search and seizure warrants on 27 February and removed a quantity of material for further analysis. Assets frozen include seven properties, three Mercedes vehicles and several bank accounts.

Jane Earl, Director of the Agency said, "The Agency will use its unique powers to recover the proceeds of crime firmly and fairly. In this case, significant assets have been acquired which could not have been funded from legitimate income. Mortgage fraud and excise evasion are not victimless crimes – the former can distort local housing markets making it more difficult for hard-working families to buy a home and every pound evaded in excise duty means a pound less to pay for public services."

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