



BROADCAST TRANSCRIPT

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Time 10:00 PM - 10:35 PM  
Station WBBM-TV (CBS) Channel Two  
Location Chicago  
Program CBS 2 News at 10:00 PM

**ANTONIO MORA, co-anchor:**

A group of elderly Chicago women say they were ripped off and they've filed a class action lawsuit against a home contractor.

Kyung Lah joins us now live to explain how. She's at the Dirksen Federal Building, where the lawsuit was filed.

Kyung?

**KYUNG LAH reporting:**

Well, Antonio, here's how the scheme works. A mortgage lender and the contractor collaborate and get the victim to sign some papers. They end up with a lot of money, the victim ends up with some shoddy work and a big mortgage payment.

**Ms. MATILDA PULPHUS (Victim):**

The step is too short, they just messed it up.

**LAH:**

Short steps, gaps between the wood, nails popping out, what 80-year-old Matilda Pulphus got from her contractor.

**Ms. PULPHUS:**

I said, how much is it? Don't worry about it, it's from the weatherization, you don't have to

pay nothing.

**LAH:**

Saying he was from the city's weatherization program, Pulphus says she sat down with her contractor and signed paper after paper. Pulphus told the lenders she can't read and says she didn't know she signed a \$41,000 home loan, sticking her with a \$600 monthly payment.

**Ms. PULPHUS:**

I know I got ripped off.

**Ms. MICHELLE WEINBERG (Plaintiffs' Attorney from Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago):**

Well, I mean, she got diddly.

**LAH:**

Attorney Michelle Weinberg says she's seen half a dozen identical cases and believes dozens of others exist.

**Ms. WEINBERG:**

The pattern seems to be that they are targeting the most vulnerable people in our community, the people who are least able to protect themselves against this sort of thing.

**LAH:**

Contractor New Look Home Services is closed, the gates locked for some time say neighbors. Pulphus doesn't want them to come back, she just wants to live the rest of her life without this enormous debt.

**Ms. PULPHUS:**

I really think they should be punished, one way or another. And I think they should be told to pay all of these peoples' money back.

**LAH:**

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of four women, it was not a class action lawsuit as was mentioned earlier.

Now, CBS 2 News has spoken to New Look Home Services in the past and in the past the owner has claimed each time of his innocence and has said in his hands he holds assigned contracts. But the city of Chicago and **Legal Aid** disputes whether those contracts are actually valid because they know of at least dozen victims, among them a blind man and a man who is now a ward of the state because he is mentally ill.

Reporting live from the Dirksen Federal Building, Kyung Lah, CBS 2 News.

**MORA:**

Thank you, Kyung.

How can you protect yourself from unscrupulous contractors?

**LINDA MacLENNAN, co-anchor:**

Consume groups and attorneys offer these tips. In your contract, get a detailed description of the work to be done and the time it's expected to take to complete the job. Get a sworn statement that all materials used are paid for by the contractor. Make sure your contractor is insured in case someone gets injured on the job. Also, get at least a one-year warranty on the work. And finally, only pay up front 25 percent.

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