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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**BROCKTON WOMAN ARRAIGNED FOR RENTAL FRAUD SCHEME SPANNING  
FOUR YEARS**

**BROCKTON** – A woman accused of securing rental properties through fraudulent means and failing to pay rent for years was arraigned today on two counts of larceny, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced.

Michelle Madeira Fontes, 42, was charged with two counts of Larceny by False Pretenses and pleaded not guilty at her arraignment today in Brockton Superior Court. The Commonwealth requested that bail be set at \$25,000. The court ultimately ordered \$5,000 cash bail with pre-trial conditions including GPS monitoring, drug and alcohol screenings and a curfew from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. if released on bail.

Between January 2021 and March 2025, Fontes allegedly defrauded four separate landlords in Brockton by securing rental housing under false pretenses and failing to pay rent. The victims are all Cape Verdean individuals who are not large-scale property owners, but rely on their rental properties as their primary source of income.

Fontes exploited their shared cultural background and language to gain trust before deceiving them. When confronted about unpaid rent, she repeatedly offered false assurances, claiming she would cover the balance through personal funds or charitable assistance. On multiple occasions, she allegedly provided fraudulent documentation, including forged bank letters, falsified pay stubs, and fabricated nonprofit letters to bolster her claims.

As a result, Fontes was evicted from multiple properties and frequently left rental units in severe disrepair upon vacating.

Following a lengthy investigation by the Plymouth County Grand Jury, Fontes was indicted, and a warrant was issued for her arrest. On March 18, 2025, she was taken into custody by members of the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department at her most recent rental property.

Assistant District Attorney Alex Zane is prosecuting the case, which was investigated by the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office, in coordination with Brockton Police and multiple defrauded property owners who came forward.

Fontes is next scheduled to appear in court on April 30.