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### Mother used house she doesn't own as bond collateral for fugitive son

By [Megan O'Matz](#), Sun Sentinel

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The mother of fugitive cop David Britto used her home as collateral to get her son out of jail. Now it seems there is a problem: She didn't own the house.

The mix-up appears to be yet another misstep in the dramatic saga of the [Boynton Beach](#) police officer who bolted for Brazil late last month rather than stand trial on charges of trafficking methamphetamines.

As expected, Britto was a no-show for the start of his trial Tuesday in federal court in Miami.

U.S. District Judge Donald L. Graham issued a warrant for the officer's arrest. "I would hope the government would exert all efforts to try to have him arrested and extradited," Graham said from the bench after a brief, 10-minute proceeding.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, lawyers and other officials were trying to sort out how Britto's mother, Janiber Vieira, 51, was able in July to use the Coral Springs house where she lives to secure a \$50,000 corporate surety bond for her son when her name is not on the deed.

It's in only the name of her husband, Mariorlando F. Vieira, [Broward County](#) records show.

"It doesn't matter if she's on the deed or not. She's my wife," Mariorlando F. Vieira said in an interview Tuesday afternoon. "What I have belongs to her, no?"

Vieira, who is Britto's stepfather, said he would sell the house and use the proceeds to pay the court and bail bondsman for the \$100,000 in bonds that were posted guaranteeing Britto's appearance in court.

Half of it — \$50,000 — is owed to Big Mike's Bail Bonds in West Palm Beach. Officials there

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declined to comment Tuesday.

Another \$50,000 could be owed directly to the court. Britto and his mother co-signed a \$50,000 personal surety bond.

The house is assessed at nearly \$200,000, according to the [Broward County](#) records. But there is a \$250,000 home equity loan against it, records show.

On Tuesday, U.S. Specialty Insurance Company of Houston, which underwrites bail bonds, staked its interest in the house by filing a copy in [Broward County](#) land records of a \$50,000 mortgage signed by Janiber Vieira in July.

It may be worthless, however, since the house is not in her name.

That doesn't mean Britto's mother is in the clear. She's in federal custody in New York and will be brought to Miami in coming days to answer to criminal charges for lying to federal authorities.

Vieira is accused of telling a Drug Enforcement Administration agent she did not know where her son was after he cut off his electronic monitoring device Aug. 24 and disappeared. But the government has evidence that she bought him a plane ticket two days earlier for his native country of Brazil, court records state.

She was arrested Sept. 2 at JFK International Airport in New York, where she was about to board a flight to Brazil. She faces up to five years in prison.

In court Tuesday, Britto's attorney, Jack Fuchs, said his co-counsel, Michael Salnick, had spoken with Britto by phone about a week after his disappearance, presumably in Brazil.

Later Tuesday, Salnick said he has been working with the U.S. Marshals Service in an attempt to get Britto, 28, to return and surrender.

"He's aware of the potential consequences to his mother," Salnick said.

According to court papers, Britto is a dual citizen of the United States and Brazil, which does not permit the extradition of Brazilian nationals— a policy that seriously hampers the United States' efforts to retrieve him.

The Brazilian Consulate in Miami gave Britto travel papers, never having been informed by federal authorities here that he was facing felony charges.

Mariorlando Vieira, 53, who works in construction in Queens, N.Y., said Tuesday that he does not know where his stepson is, and that he was unaware his wife had bought him a plane ticket.

He said he was surprised that Britto had vanished and was stunned to learn that his wife of 26 years was implicated in his escape.

"I have a beautiful family, but now they've tried to destroy my family," Vieira said of the federal authorities. "I don't know how to fix this. But I am trying."

He said his stepson is "a very good boy" and innocent of the drug charges. The criminal case, he said, left Britto despondent, even suicidal.

"Now what happens to him? He's a fugitive," Mariorlando Vieira said. "This is no good for him. This is a young man. He's 28 years old. This is no good for him. This is very bad."

*Staff researcher [Barbara Hijek](#) contributed to this report.*

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