

OPA Charges Rent Gouging To L.A. Firms

Paul W. Trousdale, young Los Angeles contractor whose recent multi-million dollar loan from the Bank of America drew national attention in the current issue of a weekly newsmagazine, was named defendant by OPA today in a \$57,000 treble damage suit alleging excess rent charges at a Wilmington housing project.

Trousdale, who was accused with six other men, four firms and ten "John Does" of charging tenants more than \$19,000 above ceilings, was identified by his office as one of the builders of Avalon Village, Wilmington.

Described by the newsmagazine as a clever financier and contractor, Trousdale, victim of a fall at his home, 666 N. Saltair Ave., West Los Angeles, was unavailable for comment.

The OPA suit asserted that the defendants used a "security deposit" scheme to collect over-ceiling rent payments from tenants at the 390-unit Wilmington project. This assertedly was in the form of one month extra rent in advance.

OPA said repeated pleas to stop the practice were ignored by the accused.

The complaint asked the court to award enough of the treble damage to repay amounts put into the security fund by tenants.

Named with Trousdale as defendants were Third Western Defense Housing Co., owners of the project; Wilmington Management Co., a partnership managing the village; Fourth Western Defense Housing Co., and Western Defense Housing Co., both contracting and housing firms; Donald Scott, John N. Douglas, A. R. Benedict, J. D. Gingrich, Dugald A. Douglas, R. C. Smith and the 10 "John Does," all variously associated with the village and with one or more of the defendant firms.