



## U.S. Department of Justice

### *United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 8, 2009

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#### **FORMER CHENAL HOMEOWNER INDICTED ON MAIL FRAUD AND ARSON CHARGES**

**Little Rock** - Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas; Stuart L. Lowrey, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the New Orleans Field Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and Thomas J. Browne, Special Agent in Charge of the Little Rock Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced that Aaron Jones, age 33, of Bryant, Arkansas, was indicted today by a federal grand jury on three counts of mail fraud, one count of the use of fire in the commission of a federal felony, and one count of arson.

The charges stem from the May 30, 2008, fire at 43 Chenal Circle, Little Rock, Arkansas, a residence that Jones and his spouse purchased on May 5, 2005, for approximately \$1.6 million dollars. The home was listed for sale in May 2007. On May 30, 2008, the residence was damaged by fire. Jones, who was home alone at the time, told law enforcement authorities that an intruder broke into 43 Chenal Circle and set fire to the residence. On July 28, 2008, in an effort to recoup his losses from the fire, Jones caused to be mailed a letter and Sworn Statement in Proof of Loss in the amount of \$2,940,229.69 to his insurance company. On September 12, 2008, Jones caused to be mailed a letter and Amended Sworn Statement in Proof of Loss in the amount of \$2,816,618.40 to his insurance company. On January 12, 2009, Jones' insurance company delivered via Federal Express a \$1.2 million check to Jones' legal counsel. This money was paid to the primary mortgage holder for 43 Chenal Circle.

"The FBI is dedicated to working with our federal, state, and local partners in thoroughly investigating these types of offenses," remarked SAC Thomas J. Browne. "We encourage our citizens who suspect these types of fraud schemes to continue to report them to us."

Don Kinney, Chief, Little Rock Fire Marshal noted, "there has been excellent cooperation and communication among all agencies with Captain Sandra Wesson, the investigator on this case for the Little Rock Fire Marshal's office."

Mail fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1341, carries a possible punishment of up to

twenty years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. The use of fire in the commission of a federal felony, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 844(h), carries a possible punishment of no less than ten years in federal prison (to be served consecutive to the underlying federal felony), and no more than life in federal prison. Arson in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 844(i) carries a possible punishment of no less than five years and no more than 20 years in federal prison, and up to a \$250,000 fine.

The investigation was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Little Rock Police Department, the Little Rock Fire Department, and the Pulaski County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Julie Peters and Michael Gordon.

An indictment contains only allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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