



U.S. Department of Justice

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Eastern District of Michigan

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**Oct 2, 2009**

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**Event: Indictment**

**Defendant: Patrick D. Winter**

**BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP MAN INDICTED  
FOR 2004 ARSON FIRE OF SOUTHFIELD OFFICE BUILDING**

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A federal grand jury indictment was unsealed today, charging a Bloomfield Township man on charges of maliciously damaging a building by fire, United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today.

Berg was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Thomas Brandon of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Peter Healy, Chief of the Southfield Fire Department.

Patrick D. Winter, 52, of Bloomfield Township, Michigan, was arraigned today on charges of maliciously damaging a commercial office building by fire located at 21751 W. Nine Mile Road in Southfield, Michigan, and related charges.

The indictment charges that, on or about October 4, 2004, Winter intentionally set fire to

the building, owned by a corporation named D.K.E. The indictment further alleges that the defendant managed the property, and that, in a scheme to defraud the Secura Insurance Company of Appleton, Wisconsin, he set fire to the building so that D.K.E. and Comerica Bank, which held a sizable mortgage on the property, could collect the insurance proceeds. As part of the scheme, the defendant is alleged to have made numerous false statements to local investigators, insurance agents and attorneys in order to conceal the fact that he had set fire to the building, a fact that would have precluded D.K.E. from collecting any insurance proceeds under the policy. In addition to arson, the defendant is charged with mail fraud and with using fire to commit mail fraud.

United States Attorney Terrence Berg said, "Arson, even of a building that is not inhabited at the time of the fire, not only results in the loss of property, but also endangers the lives of firefighters who are responsible for protecting their communities, as well as others who populate neighboring buildings in large commercial areas like Southfield. For all of these reasons, we take these crimes extremely seriously."

Special Agent Brandon stated that "Arson investigations have been and will continue to remain a top priority with ATF. ATF will continue to pursue any person(s) who are engaged in criminal activities that endanger the public, endanger firefighters and in this investigation, attempt to defraud."

Peter Healy, Chief of the Southfield Fire Department said, "The Department thoroughly investigates every fire, and aggressively pursues any indication of arson." In addition, James Dundas, City of Southfield Fire Marshal, added "Arson is a crime that we take personally and that is why we pursue it so thoroughly."

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Under the statute, Winter faces penalties of up to a maximum of 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine for arson (which also carries a minimum mandatory sentence of 5 years)

and mail fraud, and a mandatory ten year sentence for using fire to commit mail fraud, which must be served consecutively to any sentence imposed on the mail fraud charge.

The case was investigated jointly by special agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the City of Southfield Fire Department.