



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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FORMER CHENAL HOMEOWNER SENTENCED TO 120 MONTHS PLUS TIME SERVED FOR MAIL FRAUD AND ARSON

Little Rock - Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced today that Aaron Jones, age 34, of Bryant, Arkansas was sentenced to 120 months imprisonment plus time served since his detention October 4, 2010 and was fined \$125,000 for mail fraud and use of fire in the commission of a felony. The sentence also included three (3) years supervised release and restitution in the amount of \$ 1,375,246.20.

On September 28, 2010, a jury found Aaron Jones guilty of three counts of mail fraud and one count of the use of fire in the commission of a federal felony for setting fire to his home for the purpose of collecting insurance proceeds. The guilty verdict came after a week long trial in which the jurors heard testimony regarding the May 30, 2008, fire at Jones' former residence at 43 Chenal Circle, Little Rock, Arkansas and Jones' subsequent claim to his insurance company for the loss of his home. Jones claimed two men came into his home, held him at gunpoint, bound him with duct tape and started the fire before they left. The evidence revealed that Jones was having financial difficulties; left his family in Florida; duct tape found at the scene had Jones' DNA; diesel to start the fire was on Jones' clothes and in the back of his SUV; and Jones "escaped" to a neighbor's home without smoke or evidence of fire on his clothing even though his alleged escape route was determined by investigators to be the hottest point of the fire. Nothing was reported stolen from the home. On September 12, 2008, Jones 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, the Standard Fire Insurance Company/The Travelers Companies, Inc., paid \$1,207,364.11 to the first mortgage holder for the insured property. The insurance company further expended \$167,882.09 in investigating Jones's fraudulent claim.

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 was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Julie Peters and Dan Stripling.

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