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LAWYER AND WIFE CONVICTED IN SCHEME TO DEFRAUD LENDER

PHILADELPHIA - Mikel D. Jones, 55, and Dona Nichols Jones, 54, of Boynton Beach, Florida, were convicted today in connection with a scheme to defraud a New York venture capital fund which financed the operation of Mikel Jones' Philadelphia law firm. Jones, a personal injury lawyer, was convicted of conspiracy, money laundering, 14 counts of wire fraud, and 14 counts of mail fraud. His wife, Dona Nichols Jones, was convicted of conspiracy, money laundering, and 14 counts of wire fraud. Jones was acquitted of several counts of mail and wire fraud involving thefts from the City of Philadelphia. Mrs. Jones was not charged in those counts. U.S. District Court Judge Berle M. Schiller scheduled sentencing for February 7, 2012.

Jones owned and operated a law firm at 1831 Chestnut Street. In February 2006, Jones obtained a multimillion dollar line of credit from Stillwater, a lender in New York, agreeing that he would only use the proceeds of the line of credit for legitimate expenses related to the operation of his law firm. Jones and his wife then used his a shell company they controlled and the name of another media corporation located in the Philadelphia to steal money from the Lender. They created fraudulent invoices on the letterhead of Strata-Tech, the company they controlled, and Philadelphia-based Comcast-Spectacor, falsely claiming that these companies had provided goods and services to Jones' law firm. The companies provided no services to the firm. The Joneses used the fraudulently taken business-loan funds to pay off personal credit card debts and to buy 76ers basketball tickets from Comcast-Spectacor. The defendants were also convicted of laundering approximately \$160,000 in fraudulently- gotten funds through Mrs. Jones' and their daughter's Florida bank account, then using the fund to replenish funds Jones took from his law firm trust account. The Joneses obtained more than \$350,000 using fraudulent invoices and false representations to the Lender during 2008 through 2009.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, and City of Philadelphia Office of Inspector General. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Paul L. Gray and Alexander T.H. Nguyen.

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