

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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CONTACT: BARBARA BURNS  
PHONE: (716) 843-5817  
FAX: (716) 551-3051

## **BUFFALO MAN INDICTED FOR ARSON**

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that a federal grand jury has returned an Indictment charging Michael Fijal, 58, of Buffalo, N.Y., with arson. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael L. McCabe, who is handling the case, in May 2011, Fijal, a local bank employee, conspired with others to burn down a duplex at 179 Mackinaw Street which is located in Buffalo's Old First Ward neighborhood. The defendant is specifically accused of withdrawing money from a local bank for the purpose of paying an accomplice to burn the building and paying the accomplice both before and after the fire on May 22, 2011.

The Indictment is the result of investigation on the part of Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge Frank Christiano; and Investigators from the Buffalo Fire Department, under the direction of Commissioner Garnell Whitfield.

Fijal was arraigned on this charge today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeremiah McCarthy and released. The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.