



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

FEBRUARY 25, 2003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MILAN, MO., MAN INDICTED FOR HAVING BUILDING BURNED, FRAUDULENTLY COLLECTING INSURANCE

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Milan, Mo., resident was indicted by a federal grand jury today for deliberately burning his mother's property to fraudulently receive \$20,000 in insurance money.

James L. Baker, 58, of Milan, Mo., was charged today in a four-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury meeting in Kansas City.

The indictment alleges that **Baker** devised a scheme to obtain money and property by means of false pretenses on Jan. 27, 1998. It further alleges that on Jan. 27, 1998, **Baker** submitted a Missouri Property Insurance application to obtain \$20,000 in insurance for a house located at 208 W. First St. in Milan, and that **Baker** deliberately had the structure destroyed by fire on March 10, 1998. Following the fire, the indictment alleges, **Baker** failed to disclose to an adjustor with the insurance company that he had directed that the house intentionally be burned.

Counts one through three of the indictment allege that **Baker** then committed mail fraud for the purpose of executing the scheme on three occasions from March 18, 1998 until April 17, 1998. **Baker** allegedly caused a document to be mailed that included fraudulent recorded statements and a proof of loss including fraudulent statements to Ozark Claim Service and a check drawn on the account of Missouri Property Insurance Placement Facility in the amount of \$18,000, payable to his mother.

Count Four of the indictment alleges that **Baker** used the house fire to commit mail fraud on March 10, 1998.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and are not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney William L. Meiners. It was investigated by the Missouri State Fire Marshal's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow