



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Susan W. Brooks  
Southern District of Indiana**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **RESTAURANT OWNER SENTENCED FOR ARSON OF FAILING RESTAURANT**

### PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that RICHARD A. ROMANDINE, age 46, Greencastle, Indiana, was sentenced to 96 months imprisonment today by U.S. District Judge Larry J. McKinney for the crime of Arson, following his conviction at trial on March 23, 2007. This case was the result of an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Putnam County Sheriff's Department, and the Office of the State Fire Marshal/Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

ROMANDINE was convicted of having set the fire that destroyed Rick's Steakhouse, located at 5 South Main Street, Cloverdale, Indiana, on November 13, 2005.

ROMANDINE, who had owned the restaurant since January 2005, had his son obtain an insurance policy that provided \$100,000 in coverage for the personal property in the business and \$40,000 in coverage for interruption of the restaurant's business.

ROMANDINE, who had accumulated approximately \$53,000 in delinquent and outstanding debts related to the operation of the restaurant, was in dire financial straits at the time of the fire. Several days before the fire, ROMANDINE's landlord told ROMANDINE that he would close the restaurant if ROMANDINE did not make arrangements to pay the approximate \$14,800 arrearage owned to the landlord.

When ROMANDINE's efforts to pay other individuals to burn down the restaurant were unsuccessful, he staged the fire to appear as though it had been caused by a malfunction in the restaurant's electrical system. ROMANDINE, acting through his son, then filed an insurance claim.

The fire was fought by the Cloverdale Town Volunteer Fire Department, the Cloverdale Township Volunteer Fire Department, the Greencastle Fire Department, and departments of other

jurisdictions. The fire presented a substantial risk of death or substantial bodily injury to other individuals because it was located between a gasoline station and a convalescent center occupied by approximately 28 patients.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Joe H. Vaughn, who prosecuted the case for the government, Chief Judge McKinney also imposed 3 years supervised release following ROMANDINE's release from imprisonment. He was ordered to make restitution in the amount of \$264,762.

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