



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Indiana**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **TWO COLUMBUS MEN INDICTED FOR SUBMITTING FALSE CLAIMS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

### PRESS RELEASE

Timothy M. Morrison, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that MICHAEL E. BENNETT, 44, and JEREMY A. KITTLE, 29, both of Columbus, Indiana, were indicted by a federal grand jury sitting in Indianapolis for aiding and abetting the submission of false claims to the federal government following an investigation by the Defense Criminal Investigative Service.

The indictment alleges that from about May 31, 2004, until about July 2, 2007, BENNETT and KITTLE, managers of Aaron's Sales and Lease Ownership at the time of the offense, did aid and abet various service members of the Armed Forces of the United States in making and presenting to the Defense Finance and Accounting Services of the United States Department of Defense, various claims exceeding an aggregate value of \$100,000. These claims concerned housing expenses incurred by said service members in the performance of their duties at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. The indictment further alleges that BENNETT and KITTLE knew such claims to be false, in that the said claims indicated that service members were renting furniture from Aaron's Sales and Lease Ownership, when BENNETT and KITTLE knew that the service members were actually purchasing the furniture.

According to Assistant U. S. Attorney James M. Warden, who is prosecuting the case for the government, BENNETT and KITTLE face maximum possible prison sentences of 5 years and maximum possible fines of \$250,000 each. An initial hearing will be scheduled before a magistrate judge in Indianapolis.

**The indictment is an allegation only, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at trial or by guilty plea.**

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