



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Arkansas*

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POSTAL OFFICIAL PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT
OF MONEY FROM LOCAL MINISTRY

Little Rock - Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced the waiver of indictment and guilty plea of Andre Ben of Sherwood, Arkansas.

On January 29, 2009, Ben pled guilty to one count of theft of mail by a postal employee before Chief United States District Judge J. Leon Holmes. Ben faces a statutory sentence of up to five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. In addition, any term of imprisonment will be followed by up to three years of supervised release. A sentencing date will be set by the court at a later date.

According to the Information, Ben served as the Acting Officer-in-Charge of the England, Arkansas Post Office from November 2006 until May 2008. While in that position, Ben stole cash and money orders from the United States Mail that was intended for Charles Capps Ministries. Ben then converted those funds for his own use and benefit. The Ministry estimates that it suffered a loss of over \$38,000. Specific loss calculations will be determined at sentencing.

Duke stated, "Theft by any governmental official is a very serious matter. But, when you couple this type of abuse with the fact that the official was stealing from a charitable institution, the conduct becomes even more egregious." She added, "Our Office and the Office of Inspector General for the Postal Service are committed to aggressively investigating and prosecuting those individuals who abuse their positions of public trust."

The case was investigated by the United States Postal Service - Office of the Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Karen Whatley is prosecuting the case for the United States.

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