



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2008
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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ARSONISTS CHARGED

Grand Rapids, Michigan – March 11, 2008 – On the grounds of Michigan State University (MSU) in East Lansing, Michigan, United States Attorney Charles R. Gross, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent in Charge Andrew G. Arena, MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon, and MSU Police Department Chief James H. Dunlap, announced the unsealing today of a 4-count felony Indictment charging four Defendants with conspiracy to commit arson, aggravated arson, and arson in connection with the December 31, 1999, arson of Agriculture Hall on the main campus of MSU and the January 1, 2000, arson of commercial logging equipment near Mesick, Michigan. The Defendants are Marie Jeanette Mason, 46, of Cincinnati, Ohio; Frank Brian Ambrose, 33, of Detroit, Michigan; Aren Bernard Burthwick, 27, of Detroit, Michigan; and Stephanie Lynne Fultz, 27, of Detroit, Michigan.

According to the [Indictment](#), the four conspired to commit the MSU arson in order to destroy federally-funded plant genetic research being conducted by university employees, and Mason and Ambrose then carried out the arson. The [Indictment](#) alleges that the four also conspired to destroy commercial logging equipment in order to sabotage lumbering activity, and that all four Defendants then carried out the arson. The Indictment alleges that both actions were committed on behalf of the “Earth Liberation Front (ELF),” a loosely-organized movement of

environmental extremists with a history of destroying property, often by arson, in order to intimidate and coerce communities, businesses, and governments into abandoning activities that ELF adherents consider harmful to the environment.

“The [Indictment](#) we are announcing today is a testament to the perseverance, dedication and hard work of law enforcement professionals at both the state and federal level.” said United States Attorney Gross. FBI Special Agent in Charge Arena added that “This investigation has been ongoing for almost a decade and it should be a reminder to all that the FBI does not allow the passage of time to thwart our ability to apply our full resources to a case. In particular, domestic terrorism is a top priority of the FBI and we will continue to aggressively investigate and pursue prosecution of all such matters. We would also like to thank the MSU Police Department for its cooperation throughout this investigation.”

Speaking for the University, MSU President Simon observed that “This was more than an attack on a building and the destruction of valuable property. It was an assault on the core value of free and open inquiry at a research university. We always must be open to ideas that challenge our own, but what we must never allow are disruptions meant to shut down the open marketplace of ideas.” Commenting on the MSU Police Department’s significant role in the investigation, Chief Dunlap explained “This was a significant act of domestic terrorism which caused more than a million dollars in damage to facilities and loss of research records. As a result, the University dedicated an unprecedented amount of resources and personnel to investigate this crime, and the Michigan State University Police Department appreciates the cooperation of both the FBI and the United States Attorney’s Office in the joint investigation of this case and the resulting Federal Indictment.”

The case is being prosecuted for the United States by Assistant United States Attorney
Hagen W. Frank.

**The charges in an [Indictment](#) are only allegations of criminal conduct, and the
Defendants are presumed innocent until their guilt is established in court by proof beyond
a reasonable doubt.**

END