



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
Western District of Washington*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 5, 2008

**LONGVIEW MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT ARSON**

*Joined with Others to Torch Duplex After Obtaining Renter's Insurance*

RYAN M. BURGE, 27, of Longview, Washington, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Tacoma to Conspiracy to Commit Arson. BURGE admits that in June 2007, he conspired with two other people and burned down Cowan Court, a Longview duplex that had been his home. BURGE faces up to five years in prison when sentenced by U.S. District Judge Benjamin H. Settle on February 23, 2009.

According to the plea agreement, BURGE hatched a plan to burn down his duplex after obtaining rental insurance in March 2007. BURGE recruited two others to help him. On June 25, 2007, BURGE gave one of the other conspirators his debit card, pin number and two plastic containers and instructed him to go to a gas station and fill the containers with gasoline. When the co-conspirator returned, BURGE poured gasoline around inside the Cowan Court duplex and provided a means for the gas vapors to ignite. BURGE went to a friend's house and disposed of the clothing he was wearing. The gas vapors exploded, causing more than \$223,000 damage to the Cowan Court duplex. Fortunately, a family with young children that had been renting the other half of the duplex were not injured in the explosion or fire. As part of his plea agreement, BURGE has agreed to pay more than \$223,000 in restitution.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, and the Longview Police and Fire Departments.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney J. Tate London.

For additional information please contact Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office, at (206) 553-4110.