

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**FROM: Catherine L. Hanaway  
United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Missouri**



111 South 10th Street  
St. Louis, Missouri 63102

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*For Further Information: Call Public Affairs Officer Jan Diltz (314) 539-7719*

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For Immediate Release

## **FINAL DEFENDANT IS SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 41 YEARS IN PRISON FOR THE ARSON OF FOUR GROCERY STORES TO COLLECT INSURANCE PROCEEDS**

St. Louis, Missouri: The final defendant of the four area men who were convicted in May of multiple charges in connection with the arson of four grocery stores, and the attempted arson of two more business to collect over \$3.5 million in insurance proceeds have been sentenced, United States Attorney Catherine L. Hanaway, announced today.

ZEYAD ABDELJABBAR, a/k/a Steve, 39, of Woods Hill Drive, Town & Country, 63017, was sentenced to 495 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$1,140,000. There is no parole in the federal system.

The following three co-defendants were sentenced in late July:

WALID IHMOUD, a/k/a Wally, 54, of the 7800 block of Chalmette Drive, St. Louis, 63042, was sentenced to 457 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of over \$1 million dollars; CHARLES D'ARY, a/k/a Chuck, 55, of Venice, Illinois, was sentenced to 80 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of over \$1 million; and MOHAMMAD ALMASSRI, a/k/a Mike, 40, of the 8300 block of North Broadway, St. Louis, 63147, was sentenced to 60 months in prison. On May 4, the above defendants were convicted of conspiracy to commit arson; arson; attempted arson; and mail fraud. They appeared before Senior United States District Judge Stephen N. Limbaugh.

According to testimony presented at trial, between August 2002 and the present, Abdeljabbar, Ihmoud, D'ARY, and Almassri participated in a conspiracy to destroy four businesses owned by

Abdeljabbar and one business owned by Ihmoud to collect the insurance money. The fires occurred at St. Louis Supermarkets located at 8350 North Broadway; 4331 Natural Bridge in St. Louis and 8352 Frost in St. Louis County; and Quality Bargains, Inc. located at 8350 North Broadway, St. Louis and owned by Walid Ihmoud. On each occasion the defendants filed insurance claims on the damaged or destroyed businesses. The amount of money the defendants attempted to collect from various insurance carriers as a result of the fires is more than \$3.5million. The defendants also attempted to set fire to St. Louis Supermarkets on 2700 S. Grand and again at 8350 North Broadway. All the fires were set and attempted to be set within one month.

“Arson cases are hard cases to prove. The successful prosecution and lengthy sentences in this case are due to the hard work and cooperative efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department Bomb and Arson Squad, the Postal Inspection Service, and Assistant United States Attorneys John J. Ware and Matthew Drake who handled the case for the U.S. Attorney’s Office,” said United States Attorney Catherine Hanaway.

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