



## *NEWS RELEASE*

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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### **PAGE COUNTY SHERIFF INDICTED ON RICO, OBSTRUCTION CHARGES, FACES MORE THAN 300 YEARS OF FEDERAL INCARCERATION**

Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia Julia C. Dudley, Criminal Chief for the Western District Thomas J. Bondurant Jr., Special Agent in Charge for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Richmond Division Jennifer Smith Love, Special Agent in Charge for the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation C. Andre' Martin and Special Agent in Charge of the Northeast Region for the Department of Agriculture Brian L. Haaser, announced today the unsealing of an indictment charging Daniel W. Presgraves, age 46, of Luray, Virginia with committing a series of criminal acts that abused his power as Sheriff of Page County, Virginia.

A Federal Grand Jury sitting in the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia in Abingdon returned a 22-count indictment under seal on October 22, 2008. That indictment was unsealed today following Presgraves' arrest.

The indictment charges Presgraves with six counts of obstructing a law enforcement investigation, four counts of obstructing an investigation by a Federal Grand Jury, four counts of violating the civil rights of female subordinates at the Page County Sheriff's Office, two counts of making false statements, two counts of conspiracy, two counts of mail fraud, one count of money laundering and one count of violating federal Racketeering laws.

"Our citizens must know that the people given the responsibility to enforce our nation's laws and keep our friends and neighbors safe are doing so in a fair and responsible manner," Acting United States Attorney Julia C. Dudley said today. "This investigation uncovered a variety of very serious allegations against a high-ranking member of law enforcement. Like any other person charged with a crime, Sheriff Presgraves must be held accountable for these alleged acts."

"Regardless of one's status or position, when a public official elects to betray the

public's trust for personal gain, the very core of how and why our system of government operates is immediately and negatively impacted," Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division C. Andre' Martin said today. "Therefore, in partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI, the IRS Criminal Investigation Division gives priority to investigations involving the alleged breach of the public trust by government officials at any level."

"We are often asked, what harm is caused by a few folks involved in animal fighting activities," Brian L. Haaser, Special Agent-in-Charge, USDA-OIG said today. "This and previous cases investigated by USDA-OIG demonstrate that the crime of animal fighting is often connected to other types of illegal conduct."

The indictment alleges that while serving as the Sheriff of Page County, Virginia, Presgraves used intimidation and his official position to engage in a series of illegal activities. Those activities included, sexually harassing and sexually assaulting 12 different female victims, laundering money and attempting to coerce witnesses from testifying about his activities to law enforcement officials and before a Federal Grand Jury investigating his actions.

The indictment alleges that Presgraves attempted to intimidate these victims from talking about the Sheriff's activities with the "Feds." He told the victims to take this information "to the grave." In one instance, Presgraves threatened one victim, reminding the woman that even if her daughter testified to the grand jury, he could have access to her at any time.

Furthermore, the indictment alleges that Presgraves took bribes from the operators of the Little Boxwood cockfighting pit. In return for these bribes, the Sheriff, who is also charged with conspiring to sponsor this animal fighting venture, pledged to not interfere with the operation of Little Boxwood and to tip-off the proprietors of the pit if any other law enforcement agency was planning to raid the operation. On April 12, 2007, Presgraves made a false statement to a special agent of the United States Department of Agriculture about his lack of knowledge of any active cockfighting pits in his jurisdiction.

In addition to the bribes being paid by members of the Little Boxwood pit, the indictment also alleges that between 2000 and the time of his indictment, Presgraves accepted bribes from an unidentified corporation. These bribes included cash, gift cards, the use of earth moving machines and free labor for his personal projects. In exchange for these bribes, Presgraves used his position as County Sheriff to tip-off officials with the corporation about an investigation into their dealings. Presgraves also used his power to intimidate a witness not to cooperate with federal authorities investigating the corporation.

From 2001 until 2004, Presgraves deposited, or had employees of the Page County Sheriff's Office deposit, in excess of \$100,000 in cash to his personal checking accounts. Presgraves structured those deposits in amounts less than \$10,000 per deposit to avoid the filing of a Currency Transaction Report by various financial institutions.

The indictment also alleges that Presgraves withheld large amounts of revenue received by the Page County Sheriff's Office from being deposited with the Page County Treasurer. Specifically, Presgraves withheld at least \$39,409 the Sheriff's Office received from the United States Customs Service and \$47,000 the office received from PayTel, a company which installed pay phones in the Page County Jail.

One of Presgraves' duties as the Sheriff of Page County is to monitor and supervise the Page County Jail, its employees and its inmates. The indictment alleges that Presgraves abused his power by using inmates of the Page County Jail to perform work for him on his personal, residential property and properties in which he, or a member of his family, had a vested financial interest. To further this scheme, Presgraves contacted the Virginia Department of Corrections and convinced them that certain inmates, scheduled to be transferred from the Page County Jail, should remain under his custody. The defendant did not disclose that these inmates were performing personal work for him. Both the defendant his wife, and other family members transported inmates from the Page County Jail to these job locations.

The indictment alleges that Presgraves, through the activities described in the preceding paragraphs and others mentioned only in the indictment, participated in a pattern of racketeering activity.

If convicted on all counts, the maximum penalty faced by the defendant is 304 years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$2,000,000.

The investigation of the case was conducted by Phil Barnett of the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Jim Knorr of the United States Department of Agriculture, and Wayne Sumner of the Virginia State Police. Criminal Chief for the United States Attorney Thomas J. Bondurant and Assistant United States Attorney Zach Lee are prosecuting the case for the United States.

A Grand Jury indictment is only a charge and not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial with the burden on the government to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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