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**LAKE COUNTY ATTORNEY ARRESTED ON FRAUD AND OBSTRUCTION
CHARGES; ALLEGEDLY BRIBED WITNESS IN PROBE OF MISUSING
BANKRUPTCY CLIENTS' CREDIT CARDS**

CHICAGO — A Lake County attorney who allegedly made unauthorized cash advances and purchases on his bankruptcy clients' credit cards for personal use and then discharged the resulting debts in his clients' bankruptcies was arrested on federal fraud and obstruction of justice charges. The defendant, BRADLEY F. AUBEL, a lawyer since 1997, allegedly obstructed an investigation of his activities by bribing a witness in the credit card scheme and engaged in separate fraud schemes involving an auto loan and student loans. He was charged with one count each of mail fraud, wire fraud, and obstruction of justice in a three-count criminal complaint that was filed in U.S. District Court and unsealed following his arrest yesterday.

Aubel, 47, of Vernon Hills, was released on a \$10,000 secured bond after he appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Maria Valdez in U.S. District Court. A preliminary hearing was scheduled for Oct. 16.

The arrest and charges were announced today by Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and William C. Monroe, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Unbeknownst to Aubel, a cooperating individual (CI) who worked for him for approximately 10 years began cooperating with the FBI in the summer of 2011 and engaged in text messaging with Aubel that is detailed in the federal complaint affidavit. A year earlier, the CI was arrested on identity theft charges in Lake County relating to the use of one of Aubel's bankruptcy client's credit cards. According to the CI, Aubel regularly asked the CI to perform illegal activities on Aubel's behalf.

According to the affidavit, Aubel suggested that the CI plead guilty to the identity theft charges and serve a sentence, during which time, Aubel would continue to pay both the CI's salary and mortgage so that the CI would not tell law enforcement that Aubel was misusing his clients' credit cards. In addition to paying the CI's mortgage, Aubel allegedly paid the CI's sister \$6,000 to leave the area and go to Mexico so she would be unavailable to talk further to the FBI or testify at any proceeding.

Separately, between June and September 2011, Aubel engaged in a fraudulent financing scheme to obtain a 2011 Honda Fit by submitting a false credit application stating that he earned \$6,666 a month, supported by copies of bogus tax returns purporting to show that he earned \$75,585 in 2009, and \$82,330 in 2010, the charges allege. At Aubel's direction, the CI helped create the false tax returns to provide the Honda dealership to qualify for a loan. Aubel told the CI that he had not filed tax returns for the last several years, the complaint states.

At the same time, Aubel allegedly directed the CI to create a different set of bogus tax returns showing that he earned little income to use in asking the U.S. Department of Education to forbear on collecting more than \$100,000 he owed on student loans. Aubel submitted these phony returns — showing that he earned \$8,663 in 2008, \$7,578 in 2009, and \$7,018 in 2010 — to the Education Department, despite the fact that he had not filed actual tax returns for any of those years,

the charges allege. Records showed that Aubel defaulted on his student loans in November 2008 and owed a total of \$106,073 in principal and interest.

Mail and wire fraud each carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and restitution is mandatory. The Court may also impose a fine totaling twice the loss to the victim or twice the gain to the defendant, whichever is greater. Obstruction of justice carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian Netols and Christopher Parente.

The public is reminded that a complaint is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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