



U.S. Department of Justice

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FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS THREE MEN FOR BANK ROBBERIES OF FIRST FEDERAL BANK AND UNION SAVINGS BANK IN ROCKFORD

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; THOMAS J. KNEIR, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and STEVEN PUGH, Chief of the Rockford Police Department, today made the following announcement:

A federal grand jury in Rockford today indicted **JOSEPH H. POOLE**, 53 (DOB: 12/29/50), **JAMES L. NOVAK**, 54 (DOB: 2/10/50), and **RALPH F. BEILKE**, 45 (DOB: 5/5/58), with charges arising from the armed bank robbery of the Union Savings Bank, 203 North Alpine Road, Rockford, Illinois, on November 21, 2003. **POOLE** also was indicted on charges arising from the armed bank robbery of the First Federal Bank, 3402 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois, on September 13, 2002.

Poole is charged in four counts, including the armed bank robbery of the First Federal Bank, 3402 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois, on September 13, 2002, and use of a firearm during that bank robbery. He is also charged with aiding and abetting Novak in the armed bank robbery of the Union Savings Bank, 203 North Alpine Road, Rockford, Illinois, on November 21, 2003, and with aiding and abetting Novak's use of a firearm during that bank robbery.

Novak is charged in two counts of the indictment with the armed robbery of the Union Savings Bank, 203 North Alpine Road, Rockford, Illinois, on November 21, 2003, and use of a firearm during that bank robbery.

Beilke is charged in two counts of the indictment with aiding and abetting Novak in the armed bank robbery of the Union Savings Bank, 203 North Alpine Road, Rockford, Illinois, on November 21, 2003, and with aiding and abetting Novak's use of a firearm during that bank robbery.

Poole was taken into federal custody on the bank robbery charges in the state of New Mexico on January 22, 2004. Beilke was taken into federal custody on the bank robbery charge in the state of Wisconsin on February 6, 2004. Novak is currently in federal custody on unrelated charges in the District of New Mexico. Poole and Beilke have been held without bond since their arrests and are scheduled to be arraigned on the indictment before United States Magistrate Judge P. Michael Mahoney on February 11, 2004 at 10:15 a.m.

If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum potential penalty of 25 years of imprisonment on each of the armed bank robbery charges, to be followed by a mandatory consecutive sentence of

at least five years and up to life imprisonment on each of the charges of using a firearm during the commission of the bank robbery. Each defendant also faces a a period of supervised release of 3 to 5 years following release from prison, and any restitution ordered by the court. The actual sentence would be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by the Rockford Office of the FBI and the Rockford Police Department. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Michael F. Iasparro.

Members of the public are reminded that a criminal indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Each defendant is entitled to a fair trial at which time the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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