



# ATF News

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## **Molotov Cocktails, Building Fire Lands Lexington Man In Federal Prison for 35 Years**

FRANKFORT, Ky.— Special Agent in Charge Paul J. Vido of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Amul R. Thapar, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, jointly announced today that John W. Franklin, a 40 year old man from Lexington, Ky., was sentenced to pay \$83,143 in restitution to his former employer and serve 35 years in federal prison by U.S. District Court Chief Judge Joseph M. Hood for using Molotov cocktails to set fire to the WMB, Inc., office building located in 1950 Haggard Court in Lexington.

Franklin was convicted by a federal jury in January for arson, use of a firearm and destructive device in furtherance of a crime, possession of a destructive device and being an addicted person in possession of a firearm.

On May 19, 2006, a joint investigation was initiated among the Lexington Fire Department, Lexington Police Department and ATF after Franklin set fire to his former employer's WMB Engineering Company building. Franklin threw two Molotov cocktails through a window of the business. A trained accelerant detecting canine from the Lexington Fire Department alerted to the use of accelerants inside and outside of the building where the Molotov cocktails were thrown. Used matches were also recovered near the fire scene, along with Franklin's fingerprints and a tire track impression matching Franklin's vehicle.

Soon after throwing the Molotov cocktails, Franklin was located by police in his driveway outside his residence. Police recovered additional incriminating evidence inside his vehicle linking Franklin to the Molotov cocktails. Agents with the ATF subsequently obtained federal search warrants for Franklin's home, his person, and his vehicle. As a result of these search warrants, several firearms, drugs, drug paraphernalia and Franklin's gasoline soaked clothing were seized as evidence.

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During the course of the investigation, ATF National Laboratory confirmed that the chemical on Franklin's clothes was gasoline. The Lab also identified that the matches found at the scene were identical to matches recovered from Franklin, and the bottle caps and wrappers recovered from Franklin's vehicle came off the bottles used by Franklin to make the Molotov cocktails.

"Franklin's acts were cowardly and severely affected the livelihoods of hardworking people," said Vido.

Vido noted that this successful prosecution was a result of the excellent collaborative efforts between the U.S. Attorney's Office, ATF, local police and fire investigators. Vido concluded by saying that, "35 years in prison is an appropriate sentence for a man who was such a violent threat to the Lexington community."

U.S. Attorney Amul R. Thapar commended the great work done by the local and federal investigators in this case.

"This investigation is just one example of the great collaborative effort our local, state and federal law enforcement has here in the Eastern District of Kentucky. Another person who is of great danger to our community is behind bars for majority of his life," said Thapar.

Under federal law, Franklin must serve 85 percent of his prison sentence and upon release will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for five years.

The violent crime investigation and successful prosecution was conducted by the ATF Lexington Field Office, the Lexington Police Department, and the Lexington U.S. Attorney's Office.

More information on ATF and its programs is a [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov).

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