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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phoenix Man Found Guilty of Felony Fraud and Theft

(Phoenix, Ariz. – November 21, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced that Delanie Belfield Ross, 39, of Phoenix, has been found guilty by a Maricopa County Superior Court jury on three counts of felony fraudulent schemes and practices and one count of theft.

According to court documents, Ross, along with his wife, Veronica Cooper Ross, and his brother-in-law, Willard Cooper, fraudulently obtained mortgage loans for the purchase of a \$3.2 million Paradise Valley home in 1994. To obtain these loans, they created shell corporations (UPSW Consulting, Templebloc, Inc. and Horizon, Inc.). They also used fraudulent corporate tax returns and other forged documents to create the impression that Cooper, 21, was a successful, wealthy businessman with substantial assets.

After taking possession of the house, Delanie Ross recorded fraudulent releases of the liens on the loans with the Maricopa County Recorder. He then represented the house as being owned free and clear to potential investors and obtained an \$850,000 line of credit from a private family of investors, using the house as collateral. These fraudulent corporate documents and tax returns were also used to obtain leases on four SUVs from a Scottsdale automotive dealership.

The jury's verdict against Delanie Ross was returned Thursday. He is scheduled to be sentenced on Dec. 19. He has two prior federal fraud convictions in Texas and one in Arizona. Because of his prior convictions and probation status at the time of the offense, Ross faces a minimum term of 15.75 years in prison and a maximum of 28 years on each count.

Veronica Cooper Ross, who was also on probation, pleaded guilty in 2008 to hindering prosecution and attempted hindering prosecution, both felonies. After serving nearly four years in Maricopa County Jail and the Arizona Department of Corrections, she is serving a three-year probation term in Mississippi. Cooper pleaded guilty to one count of felony theft in 2005 and is also on probation in Mississippi.

The case was investigated in cooperation with the United States Secret Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant Attorneys General Gail Thackeray and E. G. Noyes. A copy of the indictment and the driver's license photo of Delanie Ross are available on the Attorney General's Web site, www.azag.gov. For additional information, contact Megan Erickson at (602) 542-8012.

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