

Ex-fire inspector convicted of felony in case linked to deadly Grand Isle motel blaze

[BY MATT SLEDGE | msledge@theadvocate.com](#) Apr 12, 2019 - 4:15 pm

A former state fire inspector who tried to hide the fact that he failed to visit a Grand Isle motel months before a fatal fire was convicted of attempting to injure public records on Thursday, New Orleans prosecutors said.

Orleans Parish Criminal District Judge Paul Bonin convicted Nunzio Marchiafava, 73, of the felony count after a bench trial. He was charged with a more serious count of malfeasance in office.

Marchiafava faces zero to 2½ years in prison at an April 25 hearing.

Authorities said Marchiafava was the New Orleans district supervisor for the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's office in March 2012. He claimed that he visited the Rusty Pelican motel on Louisiana 1 in early April.

However, prosecutors said Marchiafava never visited the structure before a Sept. 26, 2012 fire, in which Belle Brandl, 60, and Timothy Foret, 46, died.

Prosecutors said that after the fire, Marchiafava tried to destroy documents proving he was in New Orleans at the time he had claimed he was inspecting the building. He also falsified documents showing another visit to the property in May, prosecutors said.

The case originated from a complaint made to the non-profit Metropolitan Crime Commission, which was referred to the state Office of Inspector General.

Marchiafava was first charged in a bill of information in November 2013. His

lawyers spent years trying to quash the bill, court records show.

Assistant District Attorneys Daniel Smart and Jay Meyers prosecuted the case. Marchiafava's defense attorney did not immediately respond to a request for comment.