

[Controversial CFS Researcher Arrested and Jailed](#)

(Extracted from ScienceInsider) <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/>

by Jon Cohen on 19 November 2011, 6:46 PM |

Judy Mikovits, who has been in the spotlight for the past 2 years after Science published a controversial report by her group that tied a novel mouse retrovirus to chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), is now behind bars.

Sheriffs in Ventura County, California, arrested Mikovits yesterday on [felony charges](#) that she is a fugitive from justice. She is being held at the

[Todd Road Jail in Santa Paula](#)

without bail. But ScienceInsider could obtain only sketchy details about the specific charges against her.

The Ventura County sheriff's office told ScienceInsider that it had no available details about the charges and was acting upon a warrant issued by Washoe County in Nevada. A spokesperson for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office told ScienceInsider that it did not issue the warrant, nor did the Reno or Sparks police department. He said it could be from one of several federal agencies in Washoe County.

Lois Hart, one of Mikovits's attorneys, says her client is being held for extradition to Reno, Nevada, in relation to a [civil lawsuit](#) against her filed by the Whittemore Peterson Institute for Neuro-Immune Disease (WPI). Mikovits worked as the research director at WPI, a nonprofit in Reno, for 2 years until she was fired by its president, Annette Whittemore, on 29 September. On 4 November, WPI filed suit against Mikovits, alleging that she had wrongfully kept her laboratory notebooks and other information about her work for the fledgling institute on her laptop, in flash drives, and in a personal e-mail account. A preliminary injunction in the case is set to be held by Nevada's Second District Judicial Court on 22 November. On that same day, Mikovits has a hearing in Ventura County, California, where she can contest extradition, Hart says.

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Written by Administrator

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Annette and her husband Harvey Whittemore, who has worked as a high-profile attorney for the gaming industry and a major real estate developer, started WPI to help find causes and treatments for CFS and other neuroimmune diseases like Gulf War syndrome and fibromyalgia. Their adult daughter has CFS.

Hart strongly denied the charges against her client. "She does not have the notebooks, nor any 'proprietary items' from WPI," Hart wrote ScienceInsider in an e-mail. "She is entitled to a copy of the information she created."

On 7 November, a judge from the Nevada court granted a request for a temporary restraining order against Mikovits to prohibit her from "destroying, altering, disseminating, or using trade secrets and confidential information." The order contended that "immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage will result to WPI if it does not get this relief." But the order does not explicitly forbid Mikovits, who lives in Ventura, California, from leaving the state of Nevada.

After Mikovits and her research team's Science study appeared in October 2009, many other groups around the world reported that they could not find the mouse retrovirus, dubbed XMRV, in people who had CFS. Mikovits and colleagues subsequently participated in a multilab study that resulted in a September Science Express paper describing how none of the teams could reliably find XMRV in blinded samples from CFS patients. One lab Mikovits collaborated with in the 2009 Science report simultaneously retracted its contribution after discovering that a contaminant explained its XMRV findings.

UPDATE, November 19, 7:39pm EST:

Annette Whittemore, president of the Whittemore Peterson Institute, has issued the following statement:

"The Whittemore Peterson Institute was required to report the theft of its laboratory materials to law enforcement authorities. These authorities are taking the actions that they deem necessary."

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