

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 11-207

RELEASE NUMBER

November 4, 2013

RELEASE DATE

Joyce E. Dudley

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Mary Barron, Senior Deputy District Attorney

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******* PRESS RELEASE *******

Re: *PEOPLE V. WARREN CLAYTON BERRY*

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that Warren Clayton Berry pled, as charged, to two felony counts of arson of forest land occurring on October 29, 2011. Trial in the case was scheduled to start today.

In entering his pleas, Berry admitted that he willfully and maliciously ignited forest land on fire at two locations outside of Buellton. The first fire was ignited at approximately 1:16 p.m. in roadside brush along Alisal Road near Old Coast Highway. It burned approximately 0.5 acres. Authorities were notified by residents in the area and passing motorists. The second fire occurred at 1:35 p.m. in roadside brush along US Highway 101 at Nojoqui Summit. A semi-tractor trailer driver observed the defendant throw a flaming object out of his vehicle, which ignited roadside vegetation. The fire burned approximately 0.25 acres.

Santa Barbara County Fire Department and United States Forest Service resources responded to both fires. The semi-tractor trailer driver attempted to follow the defendant after he fled at a high rate of speed. Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and California Highway Patrol officers apprehended the defendant near El Capitan State Beach. Due to the quick fire department response and prevailing weather conditions that day, no structures were damaged.

Sentencing is set for January 27, 2014 in Santa Barbara Superior Court, Department 10, before the Honorable Clifford Anderson. "The vigilance of citizens who witnessed the fires and provided information to the authorities on the defendant's suspicious behavior at the time that the fires occurred lead to the successful investigation and prosecution of this case," said prosecuting attorney Mary Barron. Barron added, "The District Attorney's Office did not offer a plea bargain on this case. The defendant faces 7 years and 4 months in state prison."

District Attorney Dudley stated that her office "understands all too well that arson is not a victimless crime." Dudley added, "Our Arson Task Force has now been meeting for 3 years with the single goal of making sure our office supports careful investigations, and when appropriate, zealous prosecutions of arsonists who seek to destroy lives and properties in Santa Barbara County."

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