



ATF News

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WEATHERFORD, TEXAS, MAN SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS FOR SETTING SERIES OF SEMI-TRACTOR FIRES

DALLAS -- Special Agent in Charge Ronnie Carter of the Dallas Field Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), announced today that Randall Ellery Orff of Weatherford, Texas, has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for mail fraud, arson and destruction of a vehicle in interstate commerce.

U.S. District Court Judge Terry R. Means sentenced Orff July 12 following the defendant's March 23 guilty plea to one count of mail fraud, one count of use of fire to commit a felony and one count of destruction of a vehicle in interstate commerce.

Orff was employed as a long distance independent truck driver for various interstate trucking companies. He operated 18-wheel semi-tractor and trailer rigs that he owned or leased to own. He insured his tractors with various insurance companies or would obtain coverage under the insurance policy of the company hiring him.

According to documents filed in court, Orff admitted that from 1992 through mid-July 2003, he set at least 13 tractor fires, and at least one house trailer fire, and the total amount of the losses caused by these fires was more than \$300,000.

Orff usually started a fire in the tractor, making it appear the fire was caused by an electrical problem. Orff then claimed to investigators and insurance companies that the fires were the result of electrical or mechanical problems or some other accidental cause. Orff burned trucks while employed with, among others, Mason Dixon Lines, Universal Am-Cam and Southwest Carriers, and either filed, or caused to be filed, claims with the insurance companies to collect damages resulting from the fires.

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“It’s this type of criminal activity that has such a negative impact on everybody’s insurance rates,” Carter said. “This long term, cooperative investigation and ultimate sentence were certainly worth the effort.”

The case was investigated by ATF, the Weatherford Fire Marshal, Weatherford Fire Department and Weatherford Police Department, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mark L. Nichols.

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