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SACRAMENTO MAN SENTENCED FOR ARSON

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), San Francisco Field Division Special Agent in Charge Stephen C. Herkins and Sacramento Police Chief Rick Braziel, announced yesterday that Robert Durst was sentenced to 17 years in state prison for an arson that caused great bodily injury to four Sacramento firefighters.

On July 5, 2010, at approximately 1:30 a.m., 43 year-old Durst, a resident of Sacramento, took a candle from his home and placed it inside his neighbor's vacant house. Durst then turned on a valve in the kitchen. Approximately eight hours later Sacramento firefighters responded to a call for a reported gas leak. When firefighters opened the structure for ventilation, the oxygen entered the gas laden house. This reaction caused the candle to ignite the gas in the house, which resulted in an explosion. Three firefighters were significantly burned and another suffered serious injuries.

On April 26, a jury found Durst guilty of arson that caused great bodily injury, two counts of burglary, two counts of theft of property, and carrying a loaded firearm.

“Arson is a violent crime that often results in the catastrophic loss of life and property,” said Herkins. “Arson related crime continues to be one of ATF’s highest investigative priorities. This investigation was a joint effort and we are pleased with the successful conclusion.”

“We are appreciative of the cooperation with the various units that participated in this investigation, said Sacramento Police Chief Rick Braziel.”

This investigation was conducted by the Sacramento Police Department in conjunction with special agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Investigators with the Sacramento Fire Department. The case was prosecuted by Sacramento Deputy District Attorney Rod Norgaard.

ATF is the federal agency with jurisdiction for investigating arson violations. More information on ATF can be found at www.atf.gov

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