

City of Riverside Fire Department/Fire & Arson Task Force (CA)

INCIDENT REPORT

Official Law Enforcement Report - Unauthorized Dissemination is Prohibited

Incident Type: Structure Fire

Result: Accidental

Agency Incident ID: 1705308

BATS ID: i- i-454701

1 **CRIME:**

2 N/A

3 **EVIDENCE**

4 65 Photos

5 6 Cans of fire debris

6 1 Container of debris from Burn Safe

7 **SUSPECT/VICTIM:**

8 Marcelino Garcia

9 **VICTIMS:**

10 Homeowner [REDACTED]

11 Phone Number: [REDACTED]

12 **WITNESSES:**

13 W1- Denny Corbett- Badge #570

14 **CONDITIONS:**

15 Reference the attached BATS report for weather conditions at the time of the incident. No environmental  
16 factors had an effect in the ignition or spread of the fire.

17 **Security:**

18 No notable security issues

19 **Utilities:**

20 The residence did have connections to gas, electrical, and water. The gas and electric were shut off prior to  
21 the fire starting per Riverside Police Department.

22 **Alarm and Protection System:**

23 No Alarm or sprinkler system at the residence

24 **VEHICLES:**

25 N/A

26 **EXTERIOR:**

27 The exterior consisted of cinderblock wall construction and a composition style roof (the roof had collapsed  
28 prior to my arrival however pictures show a composition style roof)

29 **INTERIOR:**

30 The interior of the structure consisted of cinderblock walls and had an attached enclosed porch. The damage  
31 to the interior was extensive.

32 **POINT OF ORIGIN:**

33 Based on witness statements who were in the area at the time of the fire's incipient stage, the fire started in  
the Charlie/Delta corner of the enclosed patio on the Delta side of the structure.

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35 **CAUSE:**

36 Based on my training, education, fire patterns and experience the fire is accidental in nature. The fire started  
37 when a "Burn Safe" device was thrown through a window and came into contact with an unknown  
38 combustible liquid or other ordinary combustible.

39 **PROPERTY:**

40 The involved property was a single story single family dwelling with an attached car port leading to an  
41 additional single story single family dwelling. The dwelling on the east side of the address was a total loss  
42 and the dwelling on the west side did not sustain damage.

43 **NOTIFICATIONS:**

44 Los Angeles City Fire Department Arson (K9)

45 San Diego City Fire Department Arson (K9)

46 **NARRATIVE:**

47 On February 21, 2017 at approximately 1130 I, investigator Zach Pettikas F607, and my partner's investigator  
48 Bryan Klinke F493 and investigator Ray Mendoza F441 were requested to respond to structure fire at [REDACTED]

49 [REDACTED] Upon arrival on scene we met with Battalion Chief Jeff DeLaurie and Investigator Mendoza advised Chief  
50 DeLaurie to have all our personnel vacate the scene due to the criminal aspect of the incident. Chief DeLaurie  
51 advised us that the lead investigator for Riverside Police Department (RPD) was Detective Rick Cobb and we  
52 made contact with him. Detective Cobb gave us an update on the circumstances of the incident. Detective  
53 Cobb stated they had a suspect barricaded inside of the structure and the suspect would not surrender. RPD  
54 Metro responded to the scene and a search warrant was obtained to remove the suspect out of the house.  
55 RPD began an operation around 0700 to coerce the suspect to surrender. This process included discharging  
56 flameless smoke grenades and "Burn Safe" smoke devices. As the "Burn Safe" smoke device was deployed in  
57 the Delta side of the structure a fire started.

58  
59 Next I interviewed W1 Corbett who was the RPD sergeant in charge of the operation to extract the suspect  
60 from the house. W1 Corbett stated that RPD Metro team tried numerous times to coerce the suspect out of the  
61 house on his own, however the suspect did not comply. RPD obtained a search warrant to enter the structure.  
62 W1 Corbett stated they initially discharged flameless smoke canisters in the attic area. These devices were  
63 intended to "flush" the suspect out but they were ineffective. The RPD Metro team then deployed 2 "Burn  
64 Safe" devices, one on the bravo side of the structure and one on the delta side of the structure. W1 Corbett  
65 stated that when the "Burn Safe" device was deployed on the delta side of the structure a fire started  
66 approximately 3-5 seconds later. The location of the fire was in an enclosed patio in the Charlie/Delta corner  
67 of the room. RPD Metro then attempted to remove the "Burn Safe" but the fire grew too quickly and the  
device was unable to be removed. At this time W1 Corbett requested for fire department personnel to

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69 respond to extinguish the fire. Riverside Fire Department responded, however based on a known armed  
70 suspect inside the structure they staged in safe location. Based on these circumstances the extinguishment of  
71 the fire was delayed causing extensive damage to the entire structure.

72  
73 After concluding this interview, Investigator Mendoza advised me he had made contact with Los Angeles Fire  
74 Department and San Diego Fire Department to request their K9 accelerant dogs. Both of these departments  
75 agreed to send out their accelerant K9's to search the scene for any present accelerants. While we waited for  
76 both of the K9 handlers to arrive, I tasked Investigator Klinke with photographing the exterior of the  
77 structure. We did not conduct our investigation until the K9's arrived on scene, because we didn't want to  
78 disturb the scene.

79  
80 At approximately 1400 hours K9 Investigator Gus Gaeta arrived with K9 Blue. We briefed Investigator Gaeta  
81 about the particulars of the scene and he formulated a plan of how he wanted to conduct his investigation.  
82 Investigator Gaeta then conducted his investigation. (See attached supplemental report from Investigator  
83 Gaeta) K9 Blue alerted in six (6) different locations near the area of origin. Evidence was collected from all six  
84 (6) locations and all samples were taken to the Riverside County Department of Justice (DOJ) for processing.  
85 Additionally, one (1) canister of debris was also collected from the inside of the Burn Safe and sent to  
86 Riverside County DOJ for processing.

87  
88 Riverside County DOJ processed the seven (7) evidence samples and the report stated that six (6) of the seven  
89 (7) did not contain any ignitable liquid residue. Results from the one (1) additional sample came back as  
90 inconclusive. Based on these findings, ignitable liquids were not a factor in the ignition or spread of the fire.

91  
92 Based on my training, education, witness statements, fire patterns, and experience the fire is accidental in  
93 nature. The fire started when a "Burn Safe" device was thrown through a window and came into contact with  
94 an unknown combustible liquid or other ordinary combustible.

95  
96 **CASE STATUS:**

97 Closed-Accidental  
98  
99  
100  
101

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103

104

105

106 Signature

Date

107 Ray Mendoza, F441

108 Fire Captain/Arson Supervisor

109

110

Signature

Date

Zach Pettikas, F607

Firefighter/Fire Investigator

RIVERSIDE POLICE DEPT - Restricted Information  
**Public Records Act Request**  
JPEDROZA 9/18/2019 2:37 PM Unauthorized Release PROHIBITED