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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Approved by CJZ  
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**Darnell Wesson Found Guilty of Arson for Crime Committed While on Parole  
for Prior Arson Conviction**

*People v. Darnell Wesson: Kern County Superior Court Case BF188991A*

(Bakersfield) - Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a verdict on an arson case today. On August 23, 2023, a Kern County jury found defendant, Darnell Wesson, guilty of two felony charges including arson of property and possession of an incendiary device along with two misdemeanor charges including failure to register as an arson offender and resisting, obstructing and delaying a peace officer. The jury also found the defendant guilty of having suffered a prior conviction of Arson of a structure and Reckless burning of a structure at the time he committed the new arson crimes. The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Leanne Wilder.

On February 14, 2022, the defendant was a transient living in the area of Stockdale Highway and California Avenue. That morning, the defendant was seen igniting a fire behind the Mobile Gas Station next to a PG&E electrical vault. The Bakersfield Fire Department (BFD) responded and upon their arrival, the defendant fled the immediate area but was eventually located. Wesson became aggressive and resisted arrest by wandering into lanes of traffic on Stockdale Highway and ignoring commands to stop. BFD determined that the fire was intentionally set by Wesson and caused damage to the PG&E vault. When interviewed, the defendant admitted to setting the fire. The crime was also caught on surveillance video.

Wesson was convicted of prior arson crimes in 2019 and was on parole at the time of the February 2022 crime. The prior crime caused damage to a structure located on the southeast side of Stockdale Highway and California Avenue, the same area of the most recent crime.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "Arson crimes happen quickly and are extremely dangerous to community members and businesses. I'm grateful to first responders who work diligently to protect public safety, and for this conviction that will hold Wesson responsible for his repeat offenses."

On September 26, 2023, the matter will go before the Honorable Judy Dulcich for sentencing. The defendant faces up to 12 years and 4 months in prison.

Darnell Wesson:

