



PORT HUENEME POLICE DEPARTMENT
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Andrew Salinas – Chief of Police

NEWS RELEASE

UPDATE

Incident Date: September 4, 2020 / 7:12PM
Update: December 27, 2021
Case #: 20-09973
Incident Location: 500 Block of Ebbitide Circle, Port Hueneme
Type of Incident: Arson Investigation
Contact Person(s): Detective Nora Starna (805) 986-6642
Arson Investigator Brian Kinsley (805) 384-4774

Narrative:

Ventura County Fire Department Arson Investigator Brian Kinsley and Port Hueneme Police Department Detective Nora Starna working jointly together, conducted a lengthy and complex arson investigation which ultimately led to the arrest and conviction of Valeriaroxana Barriga (35-year-old resident of Ventura). On October 6, 2021, Barriga was found guilty of two counts of arson and one count of burglary which was committed in the City of Port Hueneme. She was sentenced in Ventura County Superior Court on December 6, 2021.

The initial investigation began on September 4, 2020, when Port Hueneme Police Officers responded to a condominium fire within the Surfside III Complex. The complex is within a gated beach community and consists of multi-story condominiums. It was determined that Barriga accessed the victim's home and set fire to several bedroom mattresses. Fortunately the fire was extinguished before it could spread to any other condos.

During the initial investigation, pieces of tissue paper were found inside the victim's home which through the investigation was determined to be how the fire was initially started. The tissue paper was collected at the scene and later found to have DNA evidence on it. A

forensic analysis of the tissue paper was later conducted and confirmed Barriga's DNA was in the tissues. In addition to the DNA evidence, various images of Barriaga's vehicle were obtained within the immediate area on the day of the arson. Barriga was ultimately tied to the crime utilizing this DNA evidence, surveillance technology, and multiple witness statements taken over the length of the investigation.

On October 6, 2021, Barriga plead guilty to all charges and was sentenced to a total of three felony counts with a pending settlement for restitution. Felony arson is part of California's "Three Strikes" rule for serious or violent crimes that include murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, and extortion. Barriga will also be placed on an arson registry for the duration of her life.

This case took over a year to investigate and was solved due to the extraordinary efforts from both Arson Investigator Kinsley and Detective Starna.