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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Thornton Convicted for Setting Fire to Crab in a Bag Restaurant
People v. Alicia Thornton: Kern County Superior Court Case #BF198415A

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction today. On June 4, 2025, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Pedro Naveiras, a Kern County jury found defendant Alicia Thornton guilty of arson and possessing flammable material and an incendiary device with the intention to set fire to a structure. The jury also found true factual findings that Thornton caused an inhabited structure to burn by use of a device designed to accelerate the fire.

On February 27, 2024, officers from the Bakersfield Police Department responded to the Crab in a Bag restaurant located at Union Avenue in Bakersfield for a call of an arson in progress. Upon swift action, officers and employees were successful in extinguishing a small fire located at the exterior of the business. Employees advised that prior to the officers' arrival, Thornton had been asked to leave the restaurant, refused, and then poured a bottle of rubbing alcohol on the front door of the restaurant before lighting it on fire.

An Arson Investigator with the Bakersfield Fire Department observed moderate damage to the structure that included charring and permanent discoloration due to the fire. Investigators were able to determine that the fire was intentionally set. Officers arrested Thornton on scene and found her to be in possession of several lighters, paper, and a bottle of rubbing alcohol.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "A fire can rapidly spread, endangering lives and property in a short amount of time if swift action isn't taken. As a prior strike offender, Thornton has demonstrated to be a public safety risk, and with this conviction, will secure an elevated prison sentence."

Sentencing is scheduled for July 10, 2025, in Department 6 of the Kern County Superior Court before the Honorable John R. Brownlee. Thornton's prior convictions include first degree residential burglary and assault with a deadly weapon – both strike offenses under California's Three Strikes Law. Consequently, Thornton faces an elevated sentence of up to 25 years to life in prison.

Alicia Thornton:

