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MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Re: Trial Conviction: People v. Jesse Burnham, BF183192A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a verdict on a significant arson case today. On Friday, November 19, 2021, a Kern County jury found defendant Jesse Burnham guilty of felony charges for Arson of an Inhabited Structure and Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Evidence in the trial was presented by Deputy District Attorney Leanne Wilder.

On September 11, 2020 at five o'clock in the morning, Jesse Burnham and a roommate had a confrontation about Burnham being loud and disrespectful at their Oildale residence. The roommate went back to sleep and just a few hours later Burnham was seen by a neighbor moving his personal belongings out of the house. Burnham then walked over to the side of the house where the roommate and his girlfriend were asleep, poured gasoline on the wall, and set it on fire. The people inside awoke to heat and smoke. The roommate was able to put the fire out with a garden hose before anyone was injured.

The Kern County Fire Department responded, and arson investigators were called to the scene. Investigators determined the fire was willfully and maliciously set. It was also determined through the arson investigation that Burnham poured gasoline on the outside wall and then used a torch lighter to light the fire.

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction: "Arson crimes endanger entire communities, and the destruction that can be wrought from intentional fires cannot be understated. The threat from intentional arson is particularly serious when fire is used as a weapon to intentionally endanger victims."

Sentencing is set for December 17, 2021 before the Honorable John R. Brownlee. Burnham faces a sentence of up to 14 years and 4 months in prison.