

B&A

the forensic engineer

SUSPECTED ARSON: GUILTY BY REPUTATION?

A badly maintained century style home caught fire in a rural community. The owner of the house had a history of bad debts and had failed to honor his obligations. Was this reason enough to ignore the other evidence and assume the man had indeed committed arson?

Brosz and Associates' Forensic Engineering specialists were assigned to examine evidence and determine a cause for the fire.

The accused was seen entering his house. Prior to leaving his home, he plugged in an electric heater because the furnace was not working. In fact, since moving in, the owner of the house noticed that the house had many defects and had complained to the real estate company about them. Half an hour later, after he left the house that afternoon, a neighbor noticed smoke and called the Fire Department.

After investigation by the Fire Marshall's and other specialists, the owner was arrested for arson. The Fire Marshall had determined that the fire could not have an electrical origin. Since the owner had not made any mortgage payments and had other debts outstanding, the evidence that plugging in the heater caused overheating and arcing in the defective wiring and to ignite combustibles in the area, was enough.

However, based on the expert testimony and forensic engineering work by Brosz and Associates, the owner was acquitted by the jury of all charges.

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