



Department of Justice

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ATLANTA SERIAL ARSONIST SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON

Atlanta, GA - CHRISTOPHER MOCK, 45, of Atlanta, Georgia, was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison today by United States District Judge Clarence Cooper on multiple charges of arson. A federal jury convicted MOCK, a former Chatham County (GA) Police Officer, on fourteen counts of arson on July 7, 2006.

“Mock showed a callous disregard for human life when he used gasoline to set fires in the stairwells of several occupied apartment buildings during the early morning hours, when residents were asleep,” said David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia. “Mock also targeted one apartment building because of his animosity toward Jewish people, and another building because of his animosity toward Georgia Tech students. Given these aggravating circumstances, the long sentence imposed on Mock today was entirely appropriate.”

“Arson is a crime against people,” said Vanessa L. McLemore, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. When an arsonist takes aim at persons and occupied structures, fire can be as deadly as any other weapon. ATF’s resources belong to the agencies and citizens of every town, city and state. We will always be there, in the forefront of combating violent crime in our communities.”

“We are hoping that this sends out a clear message that the fire department and other agencies takes arson very seriously,” said Fire Chief Dennis L. Rubin, of the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department.

MOCK was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison. There is no parole in the federal system. MOCK was ordered to pay \$601,550 in restitution.

According to the evidence presented during the trial: From September 2004 through October 2004, MOCK, who was then a cab driver, set a series of fires, primarily in the stairwells of 2-to-3 story brick apartment buildings in the City of Atlanta, some of which forced residents to jump to safety. These fires caused great concern for the residents of the communities of Midtown, Buckhead, Virginia Highlands and DeKalb County. The evidence at trial showed that MOCK set fire to one apartment because of his

animosity toward Georgia Tech students and that set fire to another apartment because he believed it was located in a Jewish neighborhood.

MOCK came to the attention of investigators when they noticed him walking near the scene of a fire he had set two days earlier. MOCK was then carrying a clear water bottle containing an amber colored fluid that investigators believed to be gasoline. MOCK was seen tossing the water bottle into the trunk of a cab that he was driving. The cab company MOCK worked for provided fare and GPS information that tied MOCK to the scene of several fires. Further investigation of MOCK resulted in his arrest, and the seizure of water and soda bottles containing gasoline in addition to a note describing his next target. During the trial, Atlanta Fire Rescue Department Chief Brenda Willis testified that the pattern of stairwell fires in brick apartment buildings ceased after MOCK's arrest.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department; DeKalb County Fire Rescue Department; and members of the Metro Arson Task Force. Assistance was provided by the State of Georgia Safety Fire Commissioner's Office.

Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph Plummer and Francey Hakes prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.