



Department of Justice

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Northern District of Texas

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**LOCAL MAN WHO ADMITTED SETTING FIRE TO
BIG LOTS STORE SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS
IN FEDERAL PRISON, WITHOUT PAROLE**

DALLAS - William Gary Garrard, Jr., of Plano, Texas, a former store manager of the Big Lots store in Richardson, Texas, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge David C. Godbey to 60 months in prison, announced U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper of the Northern District of Texas. Judge Godbey also ordered that Garrard, 38, pay \$256,455 in restitution. Garrard pled guilty in February to two counts of arson.

On September 23, 2003, William Gary Garrard, Jr. worked the evening shift as the store manager of the Big Lots store located in a strip shopping center at 1332 S. Plano Road in Richardson, Texas. At approximately 9:49 p.m., Garrard intentionally set a fire in the store manager's office using gasoline as an accelerant. Approximately five minutes later, firefighters with the Richardson Fire Department arrived at the scene, but by that time, the automatic sprinkler system had extinguished the fire. Garrard returned to the office, ostensibly to secure loose money, and ignited a second fire using gasoline as the accelerant, and in the process, the fire spread to a soft cast he was wearing. He sustained burns on his arms and face.

As a result of the two fires ignited by Garrard, the Big Lots store was damaged, causing losses to Big Lots and its insurers because of the property damage and the personal injuries sustained by Garrard and the worker's compensation and short-term disability claims he subsequently filed. No person, other than Garrard, was injured in the fires.

U.S. Attorney Roper praised the investigative work of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Richardson Fire Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark Penley and Linda Groves.

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