

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



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APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Mary Barron, Senior Deputy District Attorney

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December 10, 2015

Re: *People v. Antonio McBride Villasana, Case Number 1448283*

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that Antonio McBride Villasana pled no contest to Arson of an Inhabited Dwelling, Manufacturing of a Controlled Substance (Concentrated Cannabis), both felonies, and one misdemeanor count of Child Endangerment (related to a child of a neighboring family). The charges stemmed from an explosion and fire in an Ellwood Beach Drive apartment on July 21, 2014, in which the defendant was illegally manufacturing concentrated cannabis, or "honey oil," using butane gas. The Santa Barbara County Fire Department arson investigator concluded that the explosion likely resulted from the flammable butane gas which collected inside the walls of the apartment, and ignited when it encountered an ignition source. The defendant suffered serious burns in the incident. Fortunately, no one else was injured in the blast.

Mr. Villasana was sentenced to serve 180 days in county jail and will be placed on felony probation for five years. He was ordered to pay restitution for damages caused by the explosion and fire. Additionally, he must register as an arsonist for the duration of his life.

District Attorney Joyce Dudley recognized the exemplary response by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, American Medical Response, and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department. "Serious fires and explosions caused by butane honey oil or "BHO" operations are becoming all too common in our communities. They often occur in multi-unit dwellings and high-density housing areas, placing other innocent residents at risk to potential fires and explosions. The perpetrators often suffer burns and other serious injuries."

District Attorney Dudley emphasized that the tremendous public safety risk to neighbors and responding fire-fighting personnel from Butane Honey Oil operations requires serious criminal consequences, stating, "Those who manufacture Butane Honey Oil may be prosecuted for numerous drug-related charges, as well as "strike" offenses, including arson, if the manufacturing results in a fire or explosion."

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