

OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

**JOYCE E. DUDLEY**  
District Attorney



DA 04-523

RELEASE NUMBER

April 2, 2019

RELEASE DATE

*Joyce E. Dudley*

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Justin Greene, Deputy District Attorney

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**\*\*\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*\*\***

**Re: *People v. Fred Brown, III; Case No. 1507205***

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that on March 29, 2019 a Santa Barbara jury found Fred Brown III, age 52, guilty of one felony count of “defrauding or prejudicing [an] insurer”, in violation of Penal Code section 548(a).

On April 22, 2016 at 5:48 a.m. the Defendant called 911 to report that his 2010 Dodge Charger went over the roadway on East Camino Cielo in the hills above the City of Santa Barbara. The Defendant told a responding officer from the California Highway Patrol (CHP) that after he parked on level ground, turned off the engine, and exited the driver’s side door the Dodge Charger fell off the cliff. He was unable to account for the vehicle’s keys. The CHP Officer and Defendant were able to spot the vehicle approximately 250 feet down the ravine after the fog lifted that morning.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the Defendant had taken out a title loan on the vehicle and fallen behind on the payments. Investigators who rappelled down to the Dodge Charger were unable to locate the keys. Investigators did observe that the ignition was in the “on” position and the air bag had deployed. The Dodge Charger’s evidentiary data recorder was located and was analyzed by the CHP’s Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team (MAIT). MAIT investigators determined that the Dodge Charger was on, in drive, and a force was applied to the accelerator pedal five seconds prior to the deployment of the vehicle’s air bags.

Due to the investigation by the CHP and their MAIT unit, the Defendant was held accountable for this crime. In expressing her appreciation for the investigators working on this case, District Attorney Dudley stated, “This guilty verdict should also serve as a clear message to individuals who think they can commit the crime of auto insurance fraud and avoid prosecution. This is a crime that effects every auto insurance consumer because insurers pass along these losses through higher premiums.”

Fred Brown, III is scheduled to be sentenced by the Honorable Judge James Herman on May 1, 2019 in Department 1 of the Santa Barbara Superior Court. He is facing a maximum of five years in prison.

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