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Man sentenced to jail, probation for fire at parents' home

By Gary Klien

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A former drama professor who burned his parents' home in San Rafael last year was sentenced Monday to 44 days in jail and five years of probation, his lawyer said.

David Charles Apple, who posted bail while the case moved through the courts, already has served enough time in custody to satisfy the jail sentence, said his attorney, Deputy Public Defender Michael Coffino.

Apple, 57, originally faced up to 15 years in prison under an arson charge filed in November. But in a deal with prosecutors, he pleaded guilty in January to a lesser charge of reckless burning of a structure, Coffino said.

"He's never had any arrests or convictions in his life," he said. "This was a completely anomalous event in his otherwise responsible life."

Apple, a San Rafael native and former theater professor at the University of Louisiana, was arrested Nov. 26 outside 90 Sea View Drive, the 4,000-square-foot hillside home where he lived with his parents.

Apple was detained after showing up at the fire scene smelling of gasoline and alcohol. A neighbor reported seeing Apple driving away from the house shortly before the fire broke out, police said.

His parents were not home at the time, and no injuries were reported.

Sheriff's investigators said Apple set the fire over a family dispute. Apple, who went to San Rafael High School in the mid-1960s, had lived in Louisiana until moving in with his parents in recent years.

His father, a retired chemical engineer for Chevron, and his mother, a former president of the Mill Valley Women's Golf Club, had lived in the home since the 1960s. Apple's father has since died, Coffino said.

The fire gutted two bedrooms and the attic and caused an estimated \$650,000 in damage. Apple now works for the company that is reconstructing the home, Coffino said.

Read more San Rafael stories at the IJ's [San Rafael](#) page.

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