



County of San Bernardino  
Office of the District Attorney  
JASON ANDERSON, District Attorney

Grand Jury returns indictment on couple who  
sparked the Yucaipa El Dorado Fire

Contact:  
Jacquelyn Rodriguez  
publicaffairs@sbcda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 20, 2021

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. - On July 19, 2021, the Criminal Grand Jury returned a True Bill against Refugio Manuel Jimenez, Jr. and Angelina Renee Jimenez for conduct that caused the El Dorado Fire in September 2020.

Pursuant to the Grand Jury findings, an indictment has been filed against Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez for the following charges: one felony count of involuntary manslaughter, three felony counts of recklessly causing a fire with great bodily injury, four felony counts of recklessly causing a fire to inhabited structures, and twenty-two misdemeanor counts of recklessly causing a fire to property of another. Today the indictment was unsealed, the defendants were arraigned, entered pleas of not guilty and will return to court on 9/15/21. Although the District Attorney's Office requested \$50,000 bail for each defendant, the Court released them on their own recognizance.

On September 5, 2020, Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez used a smoke bomb to reveal the gender of their pregnancy at the El Dorado Park in the City of Yucaipa, California, which sparked a brush fire that in turn became known as the El Dorado Fire.

The El Dorado fire burned through 22k acres, resulting in the death of US. Forest Service Wildland Firefighter Charles Morton, injured two additional firefighters, loss or damage of residential buildings, and displaced several local communities and residents across San Bernardino and Riverside counties. I would like to extend my condolences to the family and loved ones of U.S. Firefighter Charles Morton.

No less than 6 agencies were involved in containing, extinguishing, and investigating the El Dorado Fire. I would like to personally thank the United States Forest Service, Cal Fire, the San Bernardino County Fire Department, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Homicide Division and the City of Yucaipa for their investigative efforts in this case.

I would also like to thank Supervising DDA Jill Gregory and Major Crimes DDA Lisa Crane for presenting this case to the Grand Jury.

Due to enormity and impact this conduct had on our community, the number of agencies involved, the expertise required in these types of cases and to maintain the integrity of due process and review within the criminal justice system, our Office decided to present the case to the grand jury.

Over four days, Ms. Gregory and Ms. Crane called 34 witnesses, obtained evidence requested by the Grand Jury and admitted 434 exhibits. This evidence was the basis of the indictment against the defendants that was unsealed today. There is a total of 30 charges containing 22 victims.

Finally, I want to thank the public for their patience as this case was investigated and reviewed. I am aware that members of the community, at times, may have been frustrated at the pace of our Office's review and response on this case. Given the scope and impact of the El Dorado Fire on the land and lives of so many, particularly Charles Morton and his family, it was imperative that every investigation be completed within both Federal and State agencies to provide a full and fair presentation to the members of our community that made up the criminal Grand Jury.

###