



U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS ADVISORY: ARSON SENTENCING

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Albuquerque - Sergio Baca and Chad Altman appeared for sentencing on June 10, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. before United States Senior District Judge John E. Conway. Both Baca and Altman pleaded guilty in federal court on January 7, 2009 to conspiracy to commit arson. Baca received a prison sentence of 46 months and Altman received a prison sentence 40 months. Both are ordered to pay restitution of \$796,531.92.

On Dec 6, 2007, Baca and Altman broke into and set fire to the medical practice of Dr. Curtis Boyd at 801 Encino Place, NE in Albuquerque. The resulting fire, which required the services of more than 40 Albuquerque Fire Department personnel to contain and extinguish, completely destroyed the medical practice. Dr. Boyd's practice included providing reproductive health services and performing abortions. As Baca admitted in his written plea agreement, he and Altman set fire to the medical practice to prevent Baca's former girlfriend from using the services of Dr. Boyd to terminate her pregnancy.

In their plea agreements, the defendants also admitted that, on the night in question, Baca and Altman donned dark clothing and equipped themselves with gasoline and a lighter. So as not to be caught on surveillance cameras, they left Baca's apartment by climbing down a metal pipe near his apartment balcony. Baca and Altman then drove to 801 Encino Place, NE. They broke the window of the structure and poured gasoline into Dr. Boyd's office space. One of the men then ignited the gasoline with a lighter and the two men fled the scene. While setting the fire, however, Altman suffered a burn to his hand, which caused him to drop a glove. DNA recovered from that glove was a positive match for Altman.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Albuquerque Fire Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Rumaldo R. Armijo and Paul Spiers.