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SANTA MONICA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Press Release

Serial Arson Suspect Arrested

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Santa Monica Police Department has arrested a person they believe is responsible for at least 10 arson fires. The fires were geographically located at various locations in the center of the city and involved the lighting of trash dumpsters and discarded Christmas trees. These fires led to 3 apartment complexes being damaged by flames. At one of the complexes, the fire had burned into a ground-level garage and was threatening to burn further up, into the living area of the complex. Another arson fire caused major damage to a car parked at a car dealership.

The fires spanned a 10 day period starting on December 30, 2013. Officers and detectives worked diligently in trying to identify the suspect. The Santa Monica Police Department deployed undercover officers in the areas of the arsons in an attempt to catch the person or persons responsible. Their efforts paid off when the undercover officers' attention was drawn to a man who was seen flicking a lighter several times for no apparent reason and acting suspiciously in the area of where the arsons were taking place. This person was detained and a detective was able to respond to the scene and identify the suspect as the arsonist, based on investigative work he had already completed on the case. Two other witnesses were also questioned at the time of the detention and they implicated the suspect in several arsons. The District Attorney's office filed 4 counts of felony arson against the subject.



The arsonist has been identified as Sihota, Balbinder Singh, Male/Other, DOB: 5/3/59, 54 years old, homeless. Bkg # 3812362. He was arrested on 1/9/14.

Anyone having any information regarding this investigation is asked to call Detective D'Andrea at (310) 458-6679.

Anonymous tipsters may contact Crime Stoppers at (800) 222-TIPS (8477) or www.lacrimestoppers.org. To text an anonymous tip to Crime Stoppers; please view their webpage for detailed instructions. If the information leads to an arrest, the tipster is eligible to receive a reward of up to \$1, 000.00.

