

Office of the
SHERIFF
INYO COUNTY, CA



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"A Professional Service Agency"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

SUSPECT, JOHN CHRISTIANA, ARRAIGNED

Suspect, John Christiana, 47, of San Francisco was arraigned yesterday afternoon, with a "not guilty" plea entered. Christiana is facing several felony charges; which include grand theft, vehicle theft, burglary, and receiving stolen property. Bail has been set at \$500,000. Inyo County District Attorney's office is anticipating that additional charges will be filed, which would include vandalism.

Over the last several weeks, a series of burglaries and vandalisms have plagued Bishop and Big Pine. "There is enough hard evidence to indicate that Christiana is connected to the spree of vandalisms in the Bishop Creek and Big Pine Canyon area," said Inyo County Sheriff's Investigator, Jeff Hollowell.

Christiana was taken into custody on September 7th, after Inyo Sheriff's Deputies noticed a strong smell of gasoline near the Lone Pine School. After apprehending the subject, investigations lead Deputies to a vehicle that had been reported stolen in July of this year. Several canisters used for storing gasoline were located inside the vehicle, and Christiana smelled heavily of fuel as well. Additionally, the contents of the vehicle yielded several stolen items. Deputies are currently comparing vandalism photos to evidence recovered in the stolen vehicle.

"It is critical to underscore that at this point the vandalism affecting White Mountain Research and the fire at the Forest Service Interpretive Center are under investigation, and any tie-in is speculative," stated Hollowell. Inyo County Sheriff's Department is working closely with Bishop Police Department, US Forest Service and Mono County agencies to thoroughly analyze all evidence and aggressively pursue punitive action.

The Sheriff's Department is asking that anyone with additional, applicable information please call 878-0383, or the anonymous Secret Witness tip line at 873-7209.

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