

Jenna Parks
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Fire Story Follow-Up

Chapel Hill police arrested D.G. Martin Thursday morning on charges of first-degree arson, attempted insurance fraud and conspiracy to commit insurance fraud. The charges are in connection with the supposed lawn mower fire that occurred Tuesday in the garage of Martin's home at 313 Country Club Road.

Police Chief Gregg Jarvies said: "There's no way a lawn mower fire would have spread that quickly. We are not yet ready to identify the person with whom he conspired to commit this crime. We can tell you that Mr. Martin doubled the house insurance on his home in November to \$1.8 million."

Martin pledged his house for bail and was released from Chapel Hill Police Department Headquarters at 1:15 p.m. Thursday.

David Rudolf, the Chapel Hill defense attorney who is representing Martin, said: "This is a frivolous charge. Mr. Martin is an upstanding citizen of our community and state. This fire was an accident. In the end, charges will prove baseless... Mr. Martin will not speak directly to the press, but wishes to tell you that he is innocent of all charges."

Rudolf is a renowned criminal defense lawyer who has been credited with saving Carolina Panther Rae Carruth from a possible death sentence. He is also currently defending Michael Peterson, the Durham novelist accused of first-degree murder for the death of his wife.

Martin, 58, a Yale-trained lawyer and former Green Beret, is currently the host of the University of North Carolina Television's program "North Carolina Bookwatch."