

Jenna Parks
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Martin Charges Dropped

At a special district court hearing Tuesday morning, Judge Joe Buckner dropped charges of first-degree arson, attempted insurance fraud and conspiracy to commit insurance fraud against local celebrity D.G. Martin.

Defense Attorney David Rudolf asked for the hearing and filed for immediate dismissal of all charges against Martin. He presented a strong case for his Martin's innocence in the lawn mower fire that took place at his home Tuesday.

Rudolf first presented evidence that Martin did not consciously increase his house insurance; the insurance company automatically increased it because of the rise in Martin's property value over the last five years.

Rudolf next presented a 1999 national study by Underwriter's Laboratory that indicated that lawn mowers, especially old models such as the one Martin owns, often explode when being refueled in conditions of extreme heat combined with dry leaves on the lawn mower.

Rudolf concluded by pointing out that despite the passage of a week since the fire, there is still no evidence for the conspiracy charges, nor have the police named a possible suspect in these charges.

Orange County District Attorney Carl Fox did not oppose Rudolf's motion to dismiss the charges against Martin.

After the hearing, Fox said: "I don't think the police ever had a strong case. They did not consult me before they charged him. If they had, I would have told them not to charge him... This is an embarrassment."

As Martin, an employee at University of North Carolina Television, left the hearing, he said: “I feel great. I’m just happy to have my good name back.”