



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 28, 2021

Two Academics Have Been Arrested for Arson in Connection With California Wildfires

If a wildfire is started on purpose can it really be attributed to climate change?

Again this year, large wildfires have been reported across California. And again, authorities suspect that arson may be, at least partially, to blame.

Last week, Palo Alto, California, resident Alexandra Souverneva was arrested on suspicion of being one of the sources of the Fawn Fire in North Central California, which has thus far burned at least 8,500 acres of Shasta County.



Dimple Bhati/iStock/Getty Images Plus

According to [CALFIRE](#), employees of two quarries in the area “reported seeing a white female adult trespassing on the property and acting irrationally,” on September 22 when the fire started. Later that day, at approximately 8:00 p.m., firefighters in the area reported that the 30-year-old Sourverneva emerged from the brush near the fire line and requested medical attention.

In an interview with CALFIRE, investigators gleaned information from Souverneva leading them to believe that she was responsible for starting the fire. Reportedly, Souverneva carried a working lighter with her during the incident.

Souverneva, who claims she was attempting to boil bear urine to drink and accidentally triggered the fire, now faces a felony arson charge with an enhanced charge of committing arson during a state of emergency. If convicted, she could face up to nine years in state prison, according to District Attorney Stephanie Bridgett.

According to her [LinkedIn](#) profile, Souverneva was a Caltech graduate with a B.S. in chemistry and biology and a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry, where she studied Environmental Chemistry. Her current occupation is listed as “Shaman.”

With that type of education, you wouldn’t think that Souverneva would be wandering around the Northern California brush with a lighter.

But the Souverneva case pales in comparison to that of former criminal justice professor Gary Maynard, who is alleged to have been a major source for the Dixie Fire, which is being reported as the second-largest wildfire in California history.



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Maynard was apparently a former professor at Sonoma State and Santa Clara Universities where he reportedly lectured on criminology. While being booked at the Lassen County Jail, he reportedly screamed, “I’m going to kill you, f—king pig! I told those f—kers I didn’t start any of those fires!”

But despite Maynard’s vehement denials, investigators believe they have a firm case against Maynard — so firm that a judge agreed to hold him without bail.

“Where Maynard went, fires started. Not just once, but over and over again,” said a court memorandum arguing for Maynard to be held without bail.

Authorities believe that Maynard set at least seven major fires between July 6 and August 7 of this year near the Lassen National Forest and Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Investigators believe that Maynard is at least partially responsible for the Sweetbriar Fire, which began on July 6; the Bradley Fire, which began on July 11; the Cascade Fire, which began on July 20; the Everitt Fire, which began on July 21; the Moon Fire, which began on August 5; the Conrad Fire, which began on August 7; and the Ranch Fire, which also began on August 7.

“He entered the evacuation zone and began setting fires behind the first responders fighting the Dixie fire,” court documents alleged. “Maynard’s fires were placed in the perfect position to increase the risk of firefighters being trapped between fires.”

Maynard has a doctorate in sociology and three masters degrees. Federal investigators began tracking him after an incident where his car became stuck on Mount Shasta, near the scene of a burgeoning fire. Maynard reportedly became belligerent when the investigator asked him if he knew anything about the new fire.

During last year’s fire season, arson was also a key factor in at least some of the many wildfires reported. Many suspected groups such as Antifa, as they had already been engaged in numerous fire-setting incidents during civil unrest in places such as Minneapolis, Kenosha, Seattle, and Portland. Social-media companies began censoring such theories, calling them “false claims.”

Whenever President Joe Biden talks about so-called climate change, he never neglects to name wildfires in the Western United States as one of the effects that can be attributed to the theory of man-made global warming. But are wildfires really worse due to global warming? Or are climate extremists just attempting to make it appear that way by setting many of these fires themselves?



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