



# Ex-O.C. Firefighter Sentenced for Arson

**Crime: Robert Schicket Jr., an 8-year veteran, pleads guilty to setting fire to an abandoned Yorba Linda house in 1993.**

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*Los Angeles Times DC Edition Daily – March 18, 1996*

SANTA ANA – A former Orange County firefighter who once torched his sports car pleaded guilty Tuesday to setting fire to an abandoned house the district attorney's office said.

Robert Schickel Jr., 31, was sentenced by Orange County prior Court Judge Frank F. Fasel to six months in jail and three years of probation.

“What made him decide to plead guilty was to avoid the risk of going to state prison.” His attorney, Ron Brower, said. “He’s picking up and moving on ... He has applied to go back to school to study medicine.”

The eight-year veteran firefighter was arrested in 1995 after witnesses and evidence linked him to a Moreno valley car fire in September 1994. Schickel owned the car and helped extinguish the blaze. The investigation also tied him to 1993 arson that destroyed several bedrooms and the attic of an abandoned house about two blocks from his Yorba Linda home.

Schickel said Tuesday that it has been “a long and arduous situation.” He declined to talk about the cases, but said some friendships were lost, and he has not been able to fully come to terms with the fact that he may never work as firefighter again.

Schickel, who was paramedic stationed in Stanton at the time of his arrest, was fired about six months ago.

On Feb. 24, Schickel pleaded guilty to insurance fraud for receiving an insurance settlement for his burned car. He was sentenced to six months in jail and three years of probation, the same sentence that he received in Orange County. He will serve two six-month sentences concurrently, Brower said. In addition, Schickel also is required to register as an arson offender and pay restitution in the Orange County case.

Schickel will ask to serve his sentence at home using an electronic monitoring device, Brower said. Senior deputy Dist. Atty. Mike Fell said his office will not object.

“It’s unfortunate that someone like Mr. Schickel has tainted the reputation of a very fine fire department.” Fell said.