

KERN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT



**INVESTIGATION UNIT
3555 LANDCO DRIVE SUITE B
BAKERSFIELD CA 93308**

INVESTIGATION REPORT

CASE NUMBER: 16-22831 CA-CND #001415

CASE NAME: Erskine Fire

DATE: June 23, 2016

INCIDENT TYPE: Wildland Fire

INCIDENT INVESTIGATOR(s):

- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Battalion Chief
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Engineer
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Battalion Chief CAL Fire
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain CAL Fire
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), FCS CAL Fire
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Detective KCSD
- (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Detective KCSD

1 **1 - VIOLATION(S):**

2 None at this time.

3

2 - SUMMARY:

On June 23, 2016 at approximately 1555 hours, the Kern County Fire Department Emergency Communication Center received 911 calls reporting a fire at the Archery Range, 3200 Range Road Lake Isabella, Kern County CA. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) from Kern County Fire Station 72 was first to arrive and reported "2 acres crossing the road from the range and multiple spots." With low humidity and high winds the fire quickly spread. The fire was identified as the Erskine fire, burning over 46,690 acres. Two persons suffered the loss of their lives and three Firefighters were injured. Approximately 300 homes and outbuildings were destroyed, 75 buildings sustained damaged.

Due to the size and scope of the investigation I assembled investigators and split them into two Teams. Origin and Cause Team and Criminal Investigation Team.

The Criminal Investigation Team investigated multiple reports of a person or persons in the area to the south of the Archery range. The area has a rock pile and gully running the length of the Archery range with the range on the north and a dirt road and homes to the south. We identified (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) as the person people reported in the area. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was interviewed multiple times by the Criminal Investigation Team. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was not at the Archery range or the rock pile before the fire started or at the time the fire started and was excluded as the cause of the Erskine fire. We identified no other persons in the General Area of Origin and was excluded as the cause.

The Teams proceeded to eliminate all other causes for the fire, determining the cause to be a powerline at 3200 Range Road. The powerline is overhead between two power poles identified as pole 2 and pole 3, a three-wire circuit that suffered a significant explosive electrical arc event. The powerline passed through a pine tree that was in such close contact with the tree, the tree grew around the powerline. Burning debris fell to the ground and started a ground fire that spread in the direction of the heavy winds eventually spotting across the road onto the hillside.

3 - SUSPECT(S)/SUBJECT(S):

SB-1 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was seen on the South side of the fire by multiple people.

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was interviewed twice and admits to walking across town to watch the fire after it started. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) showed investigators in person where he watched fire from and is not suspected of starting the fire.

SB-2 Kern River Archers

3200 Range Road

Lake Isabella, CA 93240

Kern River Archers

Mailing address on web-site

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Bakersfield CA, 93311

The fire originated on property leased to Kern River Archers.

4 – VICTIMS, WITNESSES & Others:

Victims – The Erskine fire burned over 46,690 acres. Two persons suffered the loss of their lives and three Firefighters were injured. Approximately 300 homes and outbuildings were destroyed. Approximately 75 buildings were damaged. At the time of this report no final number of vehicles destroyed has been identified. The report on the deceased is Kern County Sheriff's report #SR 16-17475.

V-1 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Squirrel Valley, CA 93240

V-2 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Squirrel Valley, CA 93240

W-1 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) USFS FPT 49

4875 Ponderosa Drive

Lake Isabella, CA 93240

559-862-8530

On 6/23/16 a few minutes after the fire started, (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) secured the scene, denied access and entry. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) also collected witness statements.

W-2 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) USFS LEO

4875 Ponderosa Drive

Lake Isabella, CA 93240

559-862-8530

On 6/23/16 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) assisted (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) with securing the scene.

1 W-3 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

2 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

3 Lake Isabella, CA 93420

4 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

5 Reports seeing the fire at the Archery range. Reports (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

6 her grandson saw people near the "rock pile."

8 W-4 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

9 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

10 Lake Isabella, CA 93420

11 Reports her son (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) saw people near the "rock pile" but
12 she was not home at the time of the fire.

14 W-5 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

16 Mountain Mesa, CA 93240

17 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

18 Reports he saw two people on the "rock pile" and showed us the area.

19 The area was outside the Archery range and the general area

20 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports watching the fire from.

22 W-6 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

24 Lake Isabella, CA 93240

25 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

26 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) lives south of the Archery range separated by a dirt road and the

27 "rock pile". (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports two males came to her house and warned her

28 of fire at the Archery range, one of the males is (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

29 reports she saw (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) come out of the rock pile and had

30 words with him. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports she told a Deputy "that's him" referring to

31 him as (b) (6), (b) (7) (C).

W-7 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Lake Isabella, CA 93240

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Was at (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) house when they were notified of the fire by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C).
(b) (6), (b) (7) (C). Saw general area of origin already burned and portable toilets
burning.

W-8 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Bodfish, CA 93205

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Arrived at (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) house between 1800-1900 hours. Saw (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
get in argument with (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) while leaving the area.

W-9 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Lake Isabella, CA 93240

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Saw a male come up the "gully" (also referred to as "rock pile") at
approximately 1630-1715 hours and sit and watch the fire.

W-10 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Lake Isabella, CA 93240

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Saw a male come up the "gully" (also referred to as "rock pile") at
approximately 1630-1715 hours and sit and watch the fire.

1 W-11 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

2 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

3 Lake Isabella, CA 93240

4 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

5 Was home at time of fire, reports he did not see anyone or anything
6 suspicious.

7
8 W-12 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

9 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

10 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), CA 93240

11 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

12 Provided a letter referencing Erskine fire.

13
14 W-13 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

16 Lake Isabella, CA 93240

17 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

18 Provided a TIP regarding her observations of TV news.

19
20 W-14 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) – DMV

21 5520 Lake Isabella BLVD

22 Lake Isabella, CA 93240

23 Allowed review of DMV security footage. No useful footage of fire was
24 found.

25
26 W-15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

27 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

28 Lake Isabella, CA 93240

29 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

30 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was at the Archery range from 0700-0815 hours. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

31 reports no unauthorized entrants to the range, no campfires and no one

1 smoking. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports locking the gate on his exit.

2
3 W-16 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

4 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

5 Lake Isabella, CA 93240

6 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

7 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports he saw smoke from the Archery range. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports he
8 called 911 and warned neighbors of the fire. He then traveled into the
9 Archery range and tried to extinguish the fire. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports the tree in
10 the general area of origin has a power-line in it and the tree is burned
11 around the power line at the top of the tree. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports the fire had
12 jumped beyond the 5th wheel trailer on the property when he arrived.

13
14 W-17 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

16 Bakersfield, CA 93301

17 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

18 Archery club (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). Reports the range is on a BLM lease. Provided
19 investigators with club president contact information and sign-up sheet for
20 6/23/16.

21
22 W-18 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

24 Bakersfield, CA 9311

25 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

26 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) Kern River Archers. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
27 provided California Department of Fish and Wildlife renewal agreement.

1 W-19 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

2 Engine 72

3 Kern County Fire

4 5642 Victor Street

5 Bakersfield, CA 93308

6 661-391-7000

7 First arriving Company Officer. Identified the general area the fire came
8 from, reported high wind condition and spotting.

9
10 W-20 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

11 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

12 Bakersfield, CA 93308

13 Kern River Archers (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

14 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) can provide institutional knowledge. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) since (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

15
16 W-21 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Bakersfield BLM LEO

17 3801 Pegasus Drive

18 Bakersfield, CA 93308

19 661-391-6000

20
21 W-22 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) Bakersfield BLM LEO

22 3801 Pegasus Drive

23 Bakersfield, CA 93308

24 661-391-6000

25
26 W-23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

27 Helicopter 407

28 Kern County Fire

29 5642 Victor Street

30 Bakersfield, CA 93308

31 661-391-7000

One of the first arriving Helicopters on scene. Witnessed high winds over the fire and saw fire progression from the hills around the Archery range and into the area with homes.

W-24 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Helicopter 407

Kern County Fire

5642 Victor Street

Bakersfield, CA 93308

661-391-7000

One of the first arriving Helicopters on scene. Witnessed high winds over the fire and saw fire progression from the hills around the Archery range and into the area with homes.

W-25 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Porterville Tanker Base

Porterville, CA

559-784-0828

First Air Attack over scene. Witnessed high winds over the fire and saw the fire progress from the hillside east and north of the Archery range into the area with homes.

W-26 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) PLS

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

1300 U Street

Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

916-323-1044

LIDAR Team

1 W-27 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) PLS

2 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

3 1300 U Street

4 Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

5 916-445-5556

6 LIDAR Team

7
8 W-28 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) PE, PHD

9 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

10 Pleasanton, CA 94588

11
12 Electrical Engineer

13
14 W-29 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Battalion Chief LEO

15 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

16 18464 Striker Court

17 Sonoma, CA 95370

18 Origin and Cause Team

19
20 W-30 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain LEO

21 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

22 210 West Jacinto Ave

23 Perris, CA 92570

24 951-943-4970

25 Origin and Cause Team

26
27 W-31 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain LEO

28 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

29 210 West Jacinto Ave

30 Perris, CA 92570

31 951-943-4970

Origin and Cause Team

W-32 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Detective

Kern County Sheriff's Department

1350 Norris Road

Bakersfield, CA 93308

661-391-7500

Criminal Investigation Team

Lead Investigator for the Kern County Sheriff's Office on the Erskine fire.

W-33 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Detective

Kern County Sheriff's Department

1350 Norris Road

Bakersfield, CA 93308

661-391-7500

Criminal Investigation Team

W-34 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Technical Investigations (TI)

Kern County Sheriff's Department

1350 Norris Road

Bakersfield, CA 93308

661-391-7500

Criminal Investigation Team

W-35 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) Engineer Investigator

Kern County Fire

3555 Landco Drive

Bakersfield, CA 93308

661-391-7000

Origin and Cause Team

1 W-36 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain Investigator

2 Kern County Fire

3 3555 Landco Drive

4 Bakersfield, CA 93308

5 661-391-7000

6 Criminal Investigation Team

7
8 W-37 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Chief Investigator

9 Kern County Fire

10 3555 Landco Drive

11 Bakersfield, CA 93308

12 661-391-7000

13 Inter-agency liaison and logistical support for investigation Team

14
15 W-38 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) Captain Investigator

16 Kern County Fire

17 3555 Landco Drive

18 Bakersfield, CA 93308

19 661-391-7000

20 Origin and Cause Team leader

21
22 W-39 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), Captain Investigator

23 Kern County Fire

24 3555 Landco Drive

25 Bakersfield, CA 93308

26 661-391-7000

27 Lead Investigator Erskine Fire

O-40 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), LEO Battalion Chief

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

1234 East Shaw Avenue

Fresno, CA 93710

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C) operated as the CAL-Fire liaison facilitating; CAL-Fire LIDAR response, Electrical Engineer response and CAL-Fire investigators to aid in the investigation.

O-2 Southern California Edison

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C) Lineman

2425 S. Blackstone

Tulare Ca. 93274

800-655-4555

(b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

Southern California Edison had multiple crews in the Lake area to repair powerlines. A crew with bucket truck # (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) assisted Origin and Cause Team with recovery of a private powerline. The powerline is not Edison's and was not installed or maintained by Edison.

5 - EVIDENCE:**PHOTOS:**

- A. Origin and Cause Photos
- B. KCSD T.I. Photos
- C. KCSD T.I. Photos, ***CAUTION SENSITIVE***
- D. Breckenridge cam 3
- E. Photos (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) AV ***CAUTION SENSITIVE***

EVIDENCE:

- 1. Section of powerline labeled 2-B
- 2. Section of powerline labeled 1-B
- 3. Tree trunk with short section of power line approximately 4 feet of powerline
- 4. Lighter
- 5. Plastic container
- 6. Blue 8 gig SD card labeled #1
- 7. Blue 4 gig SD card labeled #2
- 8. Blue 4 gig SD card labeled #3
- 9. Blue 8 gig SD card labeled #4
- 10. Cigarette, Marlboro
- 11. USFS Patrol 49 witness statements
- 12. Kern River Archers membership paperwork #2 emailed by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
- 13. Yellow sealed envelope LIDAR
- 14. Kern River Archers member roster #1
- 15. Kern River Archers Letter to CDFW #1
- 16. Kern River Archers Letter to CDFW#2
- 17. 2007 BLM Lease Agreement

6 – CONDITION(S):

During the Erskine Fire the weather was warm, humidity was low and winds were approximately 14 MPH. Gusts reported in excess of 38 MPH.

Lynch Canyon RAWS (Remote Automated Weather Station, LYQC1) 6/23/2016
1618 hours reported:

Relative Humidity 10%

Temperature: 89 Degrees Fahrenheit

Wind Direction: South, 169 Degrees

Wind Speed: 14 MPH, gust to 38 MPH

Aspect: West facing slope

Isabella RAWS near Lake Isabella (ISLC1), 6/23/2016 1600 hours reported:

Relative Humidity 10%

Temperature: 91 Degrees Fahrenheit

Wind Direction: West, 264 Degrees

Wind Speed: 21 MPH, gust not recorded

Aspect: West facing slope

Air Attack 410 and Helicopter 407 report gusting and sustained winds of such speed they could not maintain flight over the fire. Air Attack called off drops over parts of the fire. Additionally the Breckenridge Camera showed the fire laying over unable to rise vertically.

7 – VEHICLE(S)/EQUIPMENT

The equipment associated with the cause of the Erskine Fire is a private powerline on the Kern River Archers property. Electrical Engineer (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) describes the powerline as:

...” Power then flows via overhead lines to Pole 2 adjacent to a playground area and finally to Pole 3. In between Poles 2 and 3, the three-wire circuit goes through a tree as shown in Figure 6. ...the three-wire circuit had made contact with the tree and at some point has suffered a significant and explosive electric arc event. One photograph of this is shown in Figure 7. The circuit is comprised of two, solid, aluminum, insulated “hot” wires and one uninsulated ACSR ground/neutral wire. It is clear in Figure 7 that all three of the wires show substantial damage. The two, solid, insulated wires are both broken and bent back at approximately 90 degrees. The fact that the wires are bent so sharply suggests a powerful explosive arc had occurred.”

W-28 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) PE, PHD report in entirety is Evidence #7, PDF copy Attachment #10.

8 - PROPERTY:

The Erskine fire burned over 46,690 acres. During the course of the fire over 300 homes and outbuilding were destroyed. Approximately 75 buildings were damaged. At the time of this report no final number of vehicles destroyed has been identified.

The property the fire originated on is an Archery club, Kern River Archers. The property is owned by the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM leased the property to State of California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG). CDFG leased the property to Kern River Archers for the purpose of an archery range facility. The property encompasses 118.31 acres with a 25 year lease.

The Specific Area of Origin is located at the following coordinates:

North 35 37 03.276

West 118 27 54.850

The land on which the Specific Area of Origin is located is owned by:

Unites States

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Leased to:

State of California

Department of Fish & Game

1234 East Shaw Avenue

Fresno, CA 93710

Leased to:

Kern River Archers

Leased under agreement CACA 18073 Renewal May 7, 2007 with the defined purpose given as, "archery range facility, subject to valid existing rights."

Information above taken from lease agreement CACA 18073, Erskine Origin and Cause, and Damage assessment report.

9 - NARRATIVE:

On June 23, 2016 at approximately 1555 hours, the Kern County Fire Department Emergency Communication Center received 911 calls reporting fire at the Archery Range in Lake Isabella, Kern County CA. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) from Kern County Fire Department Station 72 was first to arrive and reported *"two acres crossing the road from the range and multiple spots."* With low humidity and high winds the fire quickly spread. The fire was identified as the Erskine fire, burning over 46,690 acres. Two persons suffered the loss of their lives and three Firefighters were injured. Approximately 300 homes and outbuildings were destroyed, 75 buildings sustained damaged.

On June 23, 2016 at approximately 1730 hours I responded to the Erskine fire in Lake Isabella CA. Prior to reporting to the Incident Command Post I went to the reported origin at the Archery Range. On scene I found W-1 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) (USFS FPT 49) at the scene with the scene taped off. This is depicted in Photos A and B taken by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) on June 24th. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told me he arrived not long after the fire was reported and found the fire moving uphill with Kern County Fire Department equipment trying to extinguish the fire. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reported, he and W-2 USFS LEO (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) flagged off the area of origin. The area he flagged is adjacent to the playground and surrounded by dirt road. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told me the area had burned and jumped to the north several hundred feet away. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told me no one had been in the origin area and no equipment was used to extinguish the area, it had burned out on its own. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told me he was available to deny access to the origin area and would physically stay at the origin.

I reported to the Incident Command Post and met with the Unified Incident Command. Chief Investigator (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) met me at the ICP. At this time homes were being lost. I requested additional County Investigators and resources for the investigation including LIDAR. Captain Investigators' (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) arrived in Lake Isabella and I escorted them to the Archery range. We determined DPA (Direct Protection Area) to be BLM. Due to darkness, high winds, and being un-familiar with the area, we left the area under the watch of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and returned to the Command Post. I reported our

1 DPA finding to Command.

2
3 The Lake Isabella area has had years of multi-agency cooperation for wildland fire
4 suppression. Chief (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and the Unified Command determined Kern County Fire
5 Department Investigators would lead the Investigation of the Erskine fire.

6
7 On June 24, 2016 I reported to the Archery range with the Investigation Team. I divided
8 the investigation into two groups; the Origin and Cause Team led by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and the
9 Criminal Investigation Team which I led.

10
11 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I reported to the Command Post. Sheriff Lieutenant (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) informed us of
12 two deceased persons at (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). The actual address was determined to
13 be (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). Lieutenant (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) responded Homicide detectives to the
14 scene. We confirmed two deceased victims, one man and one woman. We met
15 Homicide Detectives (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I assisted the
16 Detectives at the scene. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) is the lead Detective for Homicide on this case. The
17 Sheriff assigned case #SR16-17455 for this incident. Homicide and I had a post scene
18 meeting. For the remainder of the field investigation (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) assisted with
19 identification, location and interviews of subjects reported to be associated with the fire.
20 In addition, Kern County Sheriff Evidence Technician (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was assigned
21 to the investigation. The Sheriff reports are included in the case file under attachment
22 #5a, b and c.

23
24 During this time I learned and reported to (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), the fire may burn over the area of
25 origin and requested he document the scene as soon as possible. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports
26 he made initial observations and took preliminary photographs of the scene.

27
28 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) in Supplemental Report Erskine Origin and Cause reports; *"I walked the*
29 *exterior of the scene several times working both clockwise and counter clockwise in*
30 *direction. During my observations, I examined the burn indicators present. I recalled the*
31 *winds I observed the night prior from the south west. Based on the winds and my*

1 observations to this point, I entered the general origin area (GOA) from the north end of
2 the scene. I began to mark indicators using the FI-210 methodology. I used different
3 colored flags to make pattern indicators. I utilized red for advancing indicators, yellow
4 flags for lateral indicators, blue flags for backing indicators, and green flags for items of
5 interest. I followed the indicators present and worked across the north end of the scene
6 working to the south in an "S" pattern."

7
8 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) were assigned to the Archery range to assist (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
9 with plotting fire pattern indicator flags. They found the break over from advancing and
10 backing fire was the pine tree located at the south end of the island. These observations
11 brought the specific origin area (SOA) to the area around the tree. (Depicted in Photo
12 L2).

13
14 W-17 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) arrived at the Archery range and informed (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and
15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) she was a (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) of the Kern River Archers. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) provided the
16 investigators a sign-up sheet for 6/23/16 (evidence #14). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told the investigators
17 she could produce a lease agreement for use of the land from the Bureau of Land
18 Management.

19
20 The scene was left guarded by Kern County Sheriff Deputies. The Kern County
21 Sheriff's Department provided scene security for the remainder of the incident 24 hours
22 a day.

23
24 On June 25, 2016 the LIDAR Team documented the General Area of Origin including
25 the Specific Area of Origin. (Evidence #13).

26
27 While at the Archery Range (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) expressed a need for additional investigators to
28 assist with the Origin and Cause portion of the investigation. CAL Fire Battalion Chief
29 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) offered additional CAL Fire Investigators to assist and placed the
30 request.

1 W-20 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) arrived at the scene and informed investigators he is a (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) of
2 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) the Kern River Archers. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) retrieved SD cards from 4
3 cameras on the property and gave them to investigators. (Evidence #6, 7, 8 and 9). It
4 was determined the cameras were facing away from the fire scene and 3 of the 4 cards
5 filled up months prior to the fire occurring. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) explained the facility electrical
6 system to (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C).

7
8 The Criminal Investigation Team was requested to respond to (b) (6), (b) (7) (C),
9 South Lake for a report of additional fire victims. After hours of investigation it was
10 determined the bones found in a burned out structure were canine.

11
12 SB-1 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was identified as a subject seen in the area of the fire.
13 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was detained by the Kern County Sheriff's Department and taken to the
14 Sheriff substation in Lake Isabella. Detective (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I interviewed
15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) admits he was on the "rock pile" to the south of the fire at
16 the Archery range on the day of the fire. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told us he saw the fire from Tank
17 Park and walked to the fire area. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told us he entered the area using the dirt
18 road south of the Archery range and south of the "rock pile" identified as Restful Drive.
19 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) admits to being in the area for several hours watching the fire, smoking,
20 reading a book and falling asleep. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told us when he walked out of the area
21 and encountered multiple people on Restful Drive. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told us a blonde lady
22 (later identified as W-6 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)) and her husband accused him of starting the fire.
23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) denies being in the Archery Range prior to the fire. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) denies
24 starting the fire.

25
26 On June 26, 2016 at approximately 0800 CAL Fire LEO Battalion Chief (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
27 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), CAL Fire LEO Captain (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and CAL Fire LEO Captain (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
28 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) arrived to assist with the investigation. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and
29 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) were assigned to the Origin and Cause Team with (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and
30 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) as lead.

1 The Criminal Investigation Team conducted interviews of W-6 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), W-7 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), W-8
2 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), W-5 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), W-10 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and W-9 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and
3 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reported they saw a male matching the description of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
4 come up the "gully" (adjacent and north of the "rock pile") at approximately 1630-1715
5 hours and watch the fire.

6
7 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports he saw two people on the "rock pile" and showed us the area. The
8 area was outside the Archery range and the general area (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports watching
9 the fire from.

10
11 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports she was notified of the fire by W-16 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). She reports seeing (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
12 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) come out of the rock pile and had words with him. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports she told
13 a Deputy "that's him" referring to (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

14
15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports she was notified of the fire by W-16 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports she saw the
16 general area of origin already burned and the portable toilets burning.

17
18 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports she arrived at (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) house between 1800-1900 hours. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) saw
19 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) get in an argument with (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) while leaving the area.

20
21 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) in Supplemental Report Erskine Origin and Cause reports; *the Origin and*
22 *Cause Team at approximately 1130 hours, utilizing binoculars, viewed the damage in*
23 *the tree inside of the SOA in proximity to the power line running through it. Depicted in*
24 *Photo L2. Heavy damage to the powerline was observed by the Team. The Origin and*
25 *Cause Team determined the powerline sustained heavy damage inside of the tree. The*
26 *Team determined without an expert opinion, electrical could not be ruled out as a*
27 *possible cause from the ground. An Electrical Engineer was requested to assist with*
28 *the investigation.*

29
30 Further; *the Origin and Cause Team at approximately 1400 hours, began setting the*
31 *grid up in the area near the base of the tree. Depicted in Photo Q2. The grid was built*

1 in 2 foot by 2 foot squares. The grid was labeled as north to south from A to D. The grid
2 going from east to west was labeled as 1 to 7. At approximately 1440 hours, the Team
3 began the grid search. The grid search was conducted by Team members (b) (6), (b) (7) (C),
4 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). In each individual grid square, the Team showed the scribe
5 initial observations based on micro burn pattern indicators present. The findings were
6 documented and placed on a grid sketch by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and myself. Once findings
7 were recorded, the Team systemically worked the squares for any other items of
8 interest. The grid sketch can be found in Attachment #1b. The Team also used a
9 magnet to search for any metallic items prior to moving on to the next grid square.
10 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I photographed the scene during the grid process to document
11 findings. The Team removed low hanging branches on the south east side of the tree
12 inside of the grid area. These branch locations were documented by photograph. A
13 hand saw was used to prevent any contamination inside of the gridding locations.

14
15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) in Supplemental Report Erskine Origin and Cause reports; at approximately
16 1530 hours, (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I met with W-19 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) of the Kern County
17 Fire Department. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) described the grounds being secured at the time of his
18 arrival. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said the island had burned and it was not his main concern at that time.
19 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) described several spot fires north of the island where he directed suppression
20 crews to take action.

21
22 On June 27, 2016 at approximately 0800 hours W-28 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) of (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) arrived at the scene. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) conducted an investigation of the electrical
24 in and around the Specific Origin Area. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) report is included as Attachment #10.

25
26 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) in Supplemental Report Erskine Origin and Cause reports; ...the Origin and
27 Cause Team identified the grid to contain the ignition area (IA) to be in grid square F-4.
28 The IA was narrowed down to approximately the size of a basketball, this observation is
29 depicted in photo Y3, Z3. All micro indicators inside of the grid and adjacent grid
30 squares pointed to this location. The Team continued to work the grid and narrowed the
31 IA down to the size of approximately 8" circle. This is depicted in photo M4. The flagging

1 was left in place for me to use during my aerial photos for reference. The grid Team did
2 not recover any items of interest inside of the area determined to be the IA. An evidence
3 screen was used to attempt to locate items of evidentiary value. The Team placed a
4 spike inside of the area of origin for reference for the LIDAR Team to document.

5
6 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) inspected the tree and powerline interaction with the tree and reports the
7 following summary of findings;

8
9 Both main and secondary branches contained fire damage. The main branch showed
10 signs of vertical spread from the base of the tree to the approximate height of the power
11 line passing through the tree on the north facing side. The majority of the damage was
12 on the north side of the main branch. The main branch did contain damage
13 approximately one to two feet below the level of the power line completely around the
14 branch. The secondary branch showed similar damage. The secondary branch degree
15 of damage was inconsistent from the lower levels to the level of the power line. At the
16 level of the interaction point on the secondary branch, burning around the entire branch
17 was observed above and below the power line. At the base showed signs of vertical
18 spread. Levels just below the power line the damage became less vertical and became
19 top down burning. Unburned fuels were observed between the main branch and
20 secondary branch above and below the power line level in the tree. Both the main
21 branch and secondary branch showed higher degrees of damage on the north side of
22 the tree. The damage to the overall tree progressed minimally south of the secondary
23 branch. Damage did occur east of the area of the interaction point inside of the tree.
24 The degree of damage observed on the secondary branch increased above and below
25 the level of the power line. I observed the tree to have grown around the power line.

26
27 The Origin and Cause Team collected the following evidence;

28 E-1 Is a rolled section of power line. This line was the section from the west end
29 of the tree to the next pole with a tag labeled as 2B. This is depicted in photos
30 Q11 and R11.

1 *E-2 Is a rolled section of power line. This line was the section from the east end*
2 *of the tree to the pole with a tag labeled as 1B. This is depicted in photos S11*
3 *and T11.*

4
5 *E-3 Is the tree branch with the power line that was found in it. Both ends of the*
6 *power line are labeled to correspond the direction the line came through and to*
7 *what section of the line it was connected to.*

8 (Depicted in Photo #U11).
9

10 The LIDAR Team returned to the scene to document the grid and any new findings.
11

12 The Criminal Investigation Team interviewed W-11 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), W-13 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), and
13 W-14 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). The interviews produced no new information. The Criminal
14 Investigation Team made phone contact with (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) who was identified as W-16 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
15 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and set up an interview for the following day.
16

17 At approximately 1830 hours Detective (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), (b) (6), (b) (7) (C), T.I. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I
18 went to the helicopter base to interview the crew of Kern County Fire Department
19 Helicopter 407. We flew the fire from the origin to the east with W-24 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
20 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and W-23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) provided
21 an oral history of the fire as they saw it on June 23rd. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reported
22 heavy winds over the fire and spotting well ahead of itself starting new fires.
23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) photographed the fire progression as it was reported by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and
24 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). T.I. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) photos are included in Evidence, Photos # B.
25

26 On June 28, 2016 at approximately 0710 hours (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) collected additional
27 evidence from the scene.

28 E-4 Lighter, (depicted in Photo #H16).

29 E-5 Plastic container, (depicted in Photo #I16).
30

31 The Origin and Cause Team concluded processing of the scene at approximately 0910
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1 hours.

2
3 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) interviewed W-20 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) at the Archery range and
4 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) confirmed information previously provided.

5
6 At approximately 1630 hours (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I saw SB-1 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) on Erskine
7 Creek Road. I spoke with (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and asked him if he would show Investigators
8 where he walked on the day of the Erskine fire. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) agreed to show (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
9 and I where he walked to watch the fire as long as no Deputies came with us. We
10 agreed to meet at 1030 hours on the June 29, 2016.

11
12 On June 29, 2016 the Criminal Investigation Team interviewed W-16 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C).
13 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports he saw smoke from the Archery range on June 23rd. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports he
14 called 911 and warned neighbors of the fire. He then traveled into the Archery range
15 and tried to extinguish the fire. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports the tree in the general area of origin has
16 a power-line in it and the tree is burned around the power line at the top of the tree.
17 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports the fire had jumped beyond the trailer (to the north) when he arrived.

18
19 At approximately 1400 hours (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) spoke with W-20 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) by phone and
20 informed him our investigation on his property was complete and there would no longer
21 be 24 hour security. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was advised the club house was locked. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) told
22 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) to leave the gate unlocked for Firefighter use.

23
24 On June 29, 2016 at approximately 1030 hours, (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and I met with SB-1
25 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). We proceeded to Restful Drive. I read (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) his Miranda rights
26 from Sheriff Card 580 2210 710 (REV. 8-97). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) acknowledged his rights and
27 agreed to speak with us and answer any questions. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) complete interview
28 is included in the case file.

29
30 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) accessed the drainage south of the Kern River Archers Range and
31 proceeded east up the drainage. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) came to see the fire which was already

1 burning at that time. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said the fire was already burning up the hill east of the
2 range and burning towards South Lake. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) stopped in a grassy area for
3 approximately five minutes before continuing into a rocky area further east. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
4 climbed onto a large rock in a shaded area south of the clubhouse at the range.
5 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said he was alone but could hear people around the homes to the south
6 and firefighters in the area. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said he was smoking a laced cigarette and
7 reading a romantic novel and eventually fell asleep. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said he did not speak
8 or say anything while in the area.

9
10 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) led us to the rock where he said he slept and (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) searched the area
11 for any evidence. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) located the butt of one Marlboro cigarette that (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
12 believed was his. I bagged the cigarette and held it as evidence # 10. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said
13 he cleared the bowl of a marijuana pipe on the top of the rock. No remnants were seen
14 on the top of the rock.

15
16 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said he fell asleep on the rock while reading and estimated he was in the
17 area a total of two hours. After waking, (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said he made his way back down
18 the trail until he reached the fence line and he came into contact with a blonde female
19 and a dog. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said he was bitten but uninjured by the dog. He ran, continuing
20 down the hill toward the church near Erskine Creek Rd. He began walking from the
21 church and was stopped by a Kern County Sherriff near the Smoke House at 5520 Lake
22 Isabella Blvd. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was briefly detained and asked "*if he was at that fire.*"
23 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) denied being at the fire. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) was patted down and released and
24 told to leave the area.

25
26 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said he left the area and returned to (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) where he lived at
27 that time.

28
29 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said while near the fire he was coughing, sneezing and having difficulty
30 breathing at times. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) believed it was due to smoke and his proximity to the
31 fire.

1
2 While walking back down the trail to the fence line near Restful Ln., (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) led us
3 to the approximate location he came into the blonde female and the dog that bit him.
4 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) said that he also saw one male in the area near the female at the time of
5 contact.

6
7 This concluded our contact with (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)

8
9 On July 1, 2016 at approximately 1504 hours (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) made phone contact with W-15
10 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) is a Kern River Archers (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) and was at the range on
11 June 23, 2016. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports he was at the range with three other people and he
12 saw no campfires, no unauthorized persons at the range, no smoking and locked the
13 gate to the range when he departed at approximately 0830 hours.

14
15 On July 13, 2016 the Damage assessment report was received and entered into the
16 case file as attachment # 8.

17
18 On July 21, 2016 we received the (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) Engineering report. The report was
19 reviewed and entered into the case file as attachment #10.

20
21 On August 5, 2016 we received the LIDAR data from CAL Fire Technical Service/Lands
22 Unit. The report was reviewed and cataloged into evidence #13.

23
24 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reports the following Cause Exclusions in Erskine Origin and Cause;

25
26 *RAILROAD: No rail roads were present within, or near the SOA.*

27
28 *VEHICLE: The grounds surrounding the fires origin was restricted access. The gate was*
29 *reported in the closed and locked position prior to the first arriving suppression*
30 *resources. No vehicles were reported in the area prior to the discovery of the fire to the*
31 *Origin and Cause Team. No vehicle parts were located in the IA. With this information,*

1 the Team was able to exclude vehicles as a possible cause.

2
3 EQUIPMENT: The grounds surrounding the fires origin was restricted access. The gate
4 was reported in the closed and locked position prior to the first arriving suppression
5 resources. No equipment was reported in use on the property to the Investigation Team.
6 No evidence of metallic items or signs consistent with equipment use was found in the
7 IA. With this information, the Team was able to exclude equipment as a possible cause.

8
9 CAMPFIRE: The grounds surrounding the fires origin contained several fire pits. The
10 area around the GOA contained one such fire pit. This pit contained fresh wood with no
11 signs of recent use. The pit was not located in the proximity of the SOA. With this
12 information, the Team was able to exclude campfires as a possible cause.

13
14 DEBRIS BURNING: The area around the SOA did not contain any remains of debris or
15 slash. No reports of burning on the grounds were located by the Investigation Team.
16 With this information, debris burning was excluded as a possible cause.

17
18 SMOKING: The GOA contained a cigarette lighter but no other smoking materials were
19 found in the SOA or IA. The lighter showed signs of age. With this information, smoking
20 was excluded as a possible cause.

21
22 LIGHTNING: No lightning was reported during the investigation and no signs of a down
23 strike were observed in the area of origin. The Team requested lightning activity near
24 the area of origin. This data came back negative for the past 24 days. With this
25 information, lightning was excluded as a possible cause. (Attachment # 7).

26
27 ARSON: The gate entering the property was reported in the closed position and locked.
28 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) reported his Firefighter cut the chain prior to entry. This would limit access to
29 an automobile. The Criminal Investigation Team followed up on leads and conducted
30 interviews. They found no evidence of any person in the GOA at the time of ignition.

31 During examination of the scene no incendiary devices were located in the Ignition

1 *Area. With this information, the Team was able to exclude Arson as a possible cause.*

2
3 *CHILDREN: No reports of children being in the area were located by the Investigation*
4 *Team. No recent indications of children's activities were observed in the GOA. With*
5 *facility being secured and the information known, this was excluded as a possible*
6 *cause.*

7
8 *ELECTRICAL: The grounds contained electrical power near the fire GOA. The Team*
9 *noted a light used to plug in a ground flood light to light up the flag pole. This light was*
10 *excluded as a possible cause by identifying it was not plugged in at the time of the fire.*
11 *The light and cord that supplied power were not in the area of the IA. A powerline ran*
12 *from Pole 2 through the IA to Pole 3. The line was found to be live prior to the fires*
13 *ignition. The breaker supplying the powerline was tripped at the time of inspection. The*
14 *powerline ran through the tree above the ground level IA. The line was damaged and*
15 *showed signs of a catastrophic failure occurring. The tree was also observed to have*
16 *grown around the powerline. The powerline was not able to be excluded by the Team*
17 *as a possible cause.*

18
19 *FIREWORKS: No remains of fireworks were located during the perimeter search of the*
20 *scene. No evidence associated with the use of fireworks was located within the SOA or*
21 *IA. There was no reports to the Investigation Team of fireworks heard or seen in the*
22 *area prior to the incident. With this information, fireworks were excluded as a possible*
23 *cause.*

24
25 CAUSE/OPINION

26
27 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) in Supplemental Report Erskine Origin and Cause reports;

28
29 *I determined the fire cause to be the powerline inside of the tree. This cause is my*
30 *opinion based on my experience and training, as well as the observations and the*
31 *indicators present at the scene.*

1
2 *Contributing to the cause conclusion were many factors including the weather of the*
3 *date in question, the tree and powerline interaction, and the elimination of all other*
4 *possible causes. The Origin and Cause Team finding the exact area of ground level IA*
5 *was also major factor.*

6
7 *The reports of the high winds in the area on the date in question came from multiple*
8 *witness. It also was recovered from the RAWs in the area. These reports were mirrored*
9 *with the unprecedented fire activity in this area.*

10
11 *The Origin and Cause Team found the IA to be located under several of the trees limbs*
12 *at ground level on the south side of the tree just under approximately two feet from the*
13 *tree. The removal of the branches in the area made it crucial to determine the IA at*
14 *ground level. A factor in determining the cause is the location of the IA.*

15
16 *It is my opinion, this area would not present itself a place of opportunity for a subject to*
17 *inhabit or to cause an incendiary fire. The Origin and Cause Team had to remove tree*
18 *limbs to access the area around the ground IA. This opinion excludes the cause of*
19 *incendiary. Supporting the theory of ruling out an incendiary cause was witness*
20 *statements and scene observations.*

21
22 *It is my opinion, had a fire been started intentionally at the ground level IA, the burn*
23 *indicators would have been much different more specifically in the tree itself. The*
24 *weather on the day of the fire is a significant indication of this. Had a fire started at the*
25 *IA alone, it is possibly the fire would have never become as established as is was in the*
26 *tree itself and had it, the tree would have become minimally effected with the sustained*
27 *winds reported in the area on the date in question. This is shown by the fires activity in*
28 *the tree and lack of vertical spread throughout the tree. With this theory it is possible the*
29 *fire would have never involved the powerline and it would still be intact.*

30
31 *The pine tree near the ground level IA was a factor in the cause determination. In the*
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1 tree, I observed the interaction that occurred with the tree and the powerline. I observed
2 the tree grew around the powerline in the area of where the catastrophic event took
3 place. The tree and the powerline were in close proximity for an extended period of time
4 for this to have occurred. Winds occur in this area almost on a daily basis. It is probable
5 over time and the winds that occur in the Lake Isabella area for the conductors to have
6 been exposed and made contact with each other causing a catastrophic event to occur.
7 The same general area in question in the tree, showed a clean spot on the secondary
8 branch extending vertical. The burn patterns observed in the tree itself were
9 inconsistent. In the lower portions of the tree I observed burn indicators that presented
10 themselves as bottom up burning indicators. In the middle portion of the tree I observed
11 top down burning indicators.

12
13 My opinion based on my training and experience, is the ignition sequence occurs as
14 follows. The area of the tree and powerline interaction is the initial IA of the fire. The tree
15 and powerlines extended interaction caused disruption to the conductors by damaging
16 the insulation material around the powerline. High winds were reported on the date in
17 question and doing so causing the catastrophic event to occur in the tree. The event
18 caused burning in the tree at the powerline above and below the interaction point. This
19 is supported with the degree of damage at this location in comparison to the remaining
20 portions of the tree. Also supporting this is the top down burn indicators located in the
21 tree at the powerline interaction point. The affected areas of the tree and high winds
22 caused burning debris to fall onto other areas inside of the tree as well as to ground
23 level. This caused the lower portions of the tree to become involved and assisted with
24 vertical spread and the burning out of the north and east side of the tree. As the tree
25 became further involved along with the ground fire becoming established, the island
26 burned out in the direction of the winds reported in the area. The tree continues to burn
27 available fuels in the direction of the wind leaving behind the other available fuels in the
28 tree. During this time high winds in the area, cause burning items to become air born
29 and spot across the roadway and become established. The tree eventually burning itself
30 out becoming fuel limited due to the heavy winds reported. This occurs as the first

31 arriving suppression resources arrive at the scene and is observed and reported as

1 several small fires reported by (b) (6), (b) (7) (C). These spot fires grow in intensity and became
2 a well established fire moving north of the island uphill at an extreme rate of spread.

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10 - ATTACHMENTS:

1. Report Photos
2. Overhead
3. Origin and Cause Supplemental
 - a. Grid sketch
 - b. O&C Burn angle
 - c. O&C Tree terminology
 - d. O&C Pole numbers
 - e. Scene log
4. Supplemental reports
 - a. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062416 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - b. 16-22831 SUP AA410 (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - c. 16-22831 SUP BLM Lease 062816 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - d. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) -TIP 081616 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - e. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062516 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - f. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062516 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - g. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062816 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - h. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062916 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - i. 16-22831 SUP E3 092716 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - j. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) -Photos 100916 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - k. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) -TIP 062716 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - l. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) -initial 062416 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - m. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 070116 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - n. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062816 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - o. 16-22831 SUP Helicopter 407 062716 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - p. 16-22831 SUP KCSD Photos 103016 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - q. 16-22831 SUP KCSD reports 081716 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - r. 16-22831 SUP LIDAR 081216 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - s. 16-22831 SUP LIDAR Data 080516 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - t. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
 - u. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062416 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)

- 1 v. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062916 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
- 2 w. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) USFS FPT49 062316 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
- 3 x. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) 062416 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
- 4 y. 16-22831 SUP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) -email 070116 (b)(6),(b)(7)(C)
- 5 5. Kern County Sheriff reports
- 6 a. sr16-17455
- 7 b. sr16-17475
- 8 c. sr16-17564
- 9 6. Erskine RAWS Data
- 10 a. Lynch Canyon RAWS
- 11 b. Lake Isabella RAWS
- 12 7. Erskine Fire Lightning Map
- 13 8. Damage Assessment Report
- 14 9. NIMT #5 fire progression map
- 15 10. (b) (6), (b) (7) (C) Erskine report with Figures
- 16 11. Evidence Digital Copies
- 17 a. 2007 BLM Lease Agreement
- 18 b. FS P-46 FI Reports
- 19 c. KRA lease Renewal letter 07
- 20 d. KRA lease renewal letter 16
- 21 12. Evidence Log
- 22 13. Property Reports
- 23 14. TIP (b) (6), (b) (7) (C)
- 24 15. Interview Audio-Digital
- 25 16. 911 Audio-Digital
- 26 17. Interview Transcripts
- 27 18. NEMO report
- 28 19. Origin and Cause Photo log and Photos
- 29 20. RMS Station Report #16-22831