

Union County State's Attorney

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April 22, 2014

Press Release - For Immediate Release

Defendant's Name: Scotty Hughes
Age: 32
City and State of residence: Elk Point, SD
Criminal File Number: 13-317 & 13-305
Convicted of: 1st Degree Arson (F2) 22-33-9.1
1st Degree Aggravated Damages (F4) 22-34-1(2)
2nd Degree Arson (F4) 22-39-9.2(1)
Date of Disposition: April 14, 2014
Arresting Officers: 21 officers; 10 agencies; and 2 fire departments

Case Synopsis:

Scotty Hughes committed several crimes in both Union and Clay counties. Hughes was a farm hand working on the Chuck Donnelly farm. Hughes activities and crimes cost Hughes his employment with Chuck Donnelly. Hughes acted out against several people in his life that he believed had wronged him. Hughes set fire to the hay that was stacked in the Donnelly machine shed in an attempt to destroy the machine shed and the hay. About two weeks after this incident, Hughes broke into the residence that he stayed in while he was working for Chuck Donnelly and started a fire that destroyed the house. After the machine shed fire, Chuck Donnelly placed a game camera on the property, which caught Hughes committing the arson at the house. Following the arson on Donnelly house, Hughes traveled down the road and set a silage cutter on fire. After setting these two fires, Hughes went to a former girlfriend's residence and attempted to force his way into her house while she was home. The ex-girlfriend called 911 which resulted in Hughes becoming involved in a high-speed pursuit from Clay County through Union County and into Iowa.

Hughes admitted to the above offenses. At Hughes' sentencing hearing, the State identified nine (9) events of arson to show that Hughes' criminal activity was not an isolated incident. The State also established that Hughes was a danger to himself and to others through his activities. Hughes' criminal activities collectively cost victims approximately Two Hundred and Eighteen Thousand Dollars in damages, of which approximately Seventy Four Thousand Dollars of those costs the victims were personally out, due to a lack of insurance on the property that was damaged.

Sentencing Synopsis:

On the charge of 1st Degree Arson, a class 2 felony, Scotty Hughes received a twenty-five (25) year sentence with thirteen (13) years suspended. This sentence is concurrent with the sentences imposed on the 1st Degree Aggravated Damage charge.

On the charge of 1st Degree Aggravated Damages, a class 4 felony, Scotty Hughes received a ten (10) year sentence. This sentence is concurrent with the 1st Degree Arson charge

On the charge of 2nd Degree Arson, a class 4 felony, Scotty Hughes received a ten (10) year sentence with five (5) years suspended. This sentence is consecutive with the sentences in the above 1st Degree Arson and the 1st Degree Aggravated Damage charges. The court further ordered that Hughes to pay all, restitution, fines, court costs, and prosecution costs. Hughes submitted a check for approximately Seventy-Four Thousand dollars to pay all out-of-pocket expenses.

Criminal History:

This is Scotty Hughes' 1st, 2nd, and 3rd career felony conviction.