

# How a \$30-Million Federal Lawsuit Was Blown Up Over Breakfast



Six years of litigation fizzled out in July when one of the plaintiffs dropped a bombshell at a breakfast meeting with opposing counsel, effectively ending a \$30 million federal lawsuit filed against a Saudi businessman over a California wildfire.

The *Los Angeles Times* tells **the story** of the now-dismissed case over the fire that burned more than 25,000 acres. The government originally contended that an electrical junction box on Tarek Al-Shawaf's property had malfunctioned, sparked and started the Mountain fire.

Recently, one of the private plaintiffs mentioned to Al-Shawaf's lawyer that his own investigation turned up the fact that the fire probably started hundreds of feet from the Saudi's property, writes the *Times*' **Joseph Serna**.

"To be honest, at the time I didn't realize it was this crucial," plaintiff Lawrence Goda said in hindsight. "I figured the feds ... would have definitely factored that into the case."

**Read the *Los Angeles Times* article.**