

ROYAL COURT  
(Superior Number)

20th March, 1989

Before: The Bailiff, and  
Jurats Vint, Lucas, Myles,  
Baker, Bonn, Hamon, Gruchy  
and Le Ruez.

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Her Majesty's Attorney General

- v -

Ronald Reginald Coutanche

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Maliciously setting fire  
to material (3 counts).

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The Attorney General for the Crown  
Advocate R.G.S. Fielding for the accused.

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**JUDGMENT**

**BAILIFF:** The Court asked itself whether it could find in the commission of the offences or in the personality of the offender, Coutanche, such exceptional circumstances that we would be justified in taking what would be a risk of not imposing a prison sentence. The Court came to the conclusion it could find no such circumstances.

This is a case where, had it not been really a question of luck, there might well have been very serious consequences for two households. Two ladies were put in great fear and one couple were, so to speak, 'smoked out'.

We have examined the cases which we have been referred to and looked at the probation reports and we cannot find that Coutanche merits other than the conclusions asked for. The public have to be protected and we would not be satisfied if we were to grant a lesser sentence that that protection would be sufficient.

Under the circumstances therefore, Coutanche, you are sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

### Authorities

Thomas: Principles of Sentencing (2nd Edn): p.170.

R. -v- Slater: (1979) 1 Cr. App. R. (S) 349.

R. -v- Gouws: (1981) 3 Cr. App. R. (S) 325.

R. -v- Compton (1983) 5 Cr. App. R. (S) 411.

R. -v- Small (1980) 2 Cr. App. R. (S) 25.

R. -v- Zywina (1984) 6 Cr. App. R. (S) 434.

Mullin: Jersey Unreported: 31st October, 1988.