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Firebombings at Homes of 2 California Researchers

By JESSE McKINLEY

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — The police and federal authorities are investigating firebombings at the homes of two researchers at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The attacks, which the university described as “antiscience violence,” occurred nearly simultaneously before dawn on Saturday, just days after the police in Santa Cruz discovered pamphlets in a coffee shop warning of attacks against “animal abusers everywhere.” The pamphlets included the names, addresses and other personal information of several researchers at the university, according to a news release put out on Friday by the university.

About 5:30 a.m. Saturday, two small bombs ignited outside the researchers’ homes. In one of the attacks, a vehicle was destroyed in a faculty member’s driveway. At the second residence, a two-story home near the university’s front gates, the fire forced the researcher, his wife and two children to flee the home from an upstairs window. The fires were quickly extinguished.

One minor injury was reported, according to The Santa Cruz Sentinel, which also said the police were viewing the attacks as acts of attempted homicide and domestic terrorism. The Santa Cruz Police Department would not comment on their investigation on Sunday.

But the researcher whose house caught fire was identified by The Associated Press as David Feldheim, a molecular biologist, who was listed in the pamphlet. The other researcher was not identified.

The fires provoked an angry response from the university's chancellor, who said the attacks were being investigated by the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) and the [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives](#), as well as by the campus police and the state fire marshal's office.

"These unconscionable acts put the researchers, their families — including their children — and their neighbors in grave danger," the chancellor, George R. Blumenthal, said in a news release.

The university described the attacks as the latest in a series of threats and provocations from those opposed to "biomedical research using animals," including a February incident in which several masked intruders entered a researcher's home. After a confrontation, the intruders fled. That incident followed harassing phone calls and vandalism of researchers' homes, the university said.

In December, the 10 chancellors at the University of California campuses affirmed in a statement their support of animal research and the university system's commitment to "the highest standards of animal care, safety and health."

At one of the bombed properties, the porch was badly scorched and a plastic watering can lay melted next to the charred front door. Two small windows in the door had also melted.

The attacks surprised some in Santa Cruz, a genial beachfront town where laid-back college students and equally relaxed day-trippers make up much of the landscape.

Chris Conway, who lives across the street from one of the homes that was attacked, said investigators had combed the site all day Saturday.

"I don't know what they did to deserve that," said Mr. Conway, a 19-year-old student. "I think that's kind of messed up to do that to someone's home."