# Dundee man dubbed Scotland’s dumbest criminal after setting himself on fire while torching cars



A hapless enforcer who inadvertently set himself on fire while attempting to torch a car in Dundee has been infamously dubbed “Scotland’s dumbest criminal” by Sheriff Tim Niven-Smith. The case revolves around Darren Gibb, who, acting under the influence of gangland figures, targeted three vehicles in a series of reckless acts that culminated in alarming property damage and personal injury.

Gibb's actions resulted in £42,000 worth of damage to a range of vehicles, including a Volkswagen Golf, a Toyota Aygo, an Audi A6, and a Mercedes-Benz. Dramatic footage presented to Dundee Sheriff Court revealed the ferocity of the flames that engulfed these cars, ignited with accelerants. Residents in the Charleston Drive area witnessed the chaos on the early morning of September 19 last year, with one witness reporting a "loud bang" that prompted a look outside, only to discover the silver Volkswagen Golf ablaze.

Prosecutor Stephanie Paterson detailed how witnesses saw Gibb and accomplices fleeing the scene. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service responded promptly, extinguishing the blaze in a scenario they later deemed to be wilful arson. Investigators uncovered remnants of a jerry can within a black rucksack left at the scene, aiding in linking Gibb to these acts.

The case took a further twist on October 24, when Gibb, after hiring a taxi, was seen yet again attempting to set fire to an Audi. In a chilling echo of his earlier actions, the words “let’s go Megan” were spray-painted at the scene, a message directed towards the daughter of a neighbouring resident. Caught on Ring doorbell footage, Gibb was seen using an accelerant before absconding in the direction of Old Glamis Road, leaving behind a scene of chaos that included an Audi engulfed in flames, while the owner desperately attempted to extinguish the fire.

Law enforcement apprehended Gibb shortly thereafter, his clothes reeking of petrol, evidence compounded by the burn marks on his hands and melted fabric on his jacket. During the court proceedings, his defence solicitor, Mike Short, stated that Gibb "chose to follow instructions" from higher-ranking criminals, illustrating a concerning trend of young individuals becoming embroiled in the dangerous world of organised crime, often compelled to commit violent acts.

Sheriff Niven-Smith’s remarks punctuated the absurdity of Gibb’s situation, noting, “He’s running with one of his hands on fire because the accelerant has gone on himself.” The sheriff’s quip about Gibb’s poor choices contrasted sharply with the serious implications of his actions, leading to Gibb pleading guilty to three counts of wilful fire-raising across two streets in Dundee. Sentencing has been deferred for further assessment, one that will evaluate the potential for an extended sentence and a supervised release order.

This case casts a stark light on an ongoing issue in Dundee and beyond, where fire-raising incidents have increasingly been linked to juvenile delinquency. A recent report highlighted actions taken against teenagers in Dundee for similarly reckless behaviour, with police urging parents to monitor their children's activities closely. As communities face challenges posed by such anti-social behaviour, incidents like Gibb’s serve as a cautionary tale about the risks of engaging with criminal networks, particularly for those who may feel pressure to carry out dangerous activities without understanding the potential consequences.

With sentencing pending, the court will not only evaluate Gibb’s fate but may also reflect on the broader societal implications of youth involvement in crime, as this incident sheds light on a pressing need for intervention and support for vulnerable individuals caught in the crosshairs of criminal influence.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/), [[3]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/2939463/teens-torching-bins-dundee/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/), [[4]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/1154962/hapless-montrose-thief-caught-beside-home-hed-broken-into-with-stolen-goods-and-covered-in-own-blood/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/), [[3]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/2939463/teens-torching-bins-dundee/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5250125/dundee-firebug-scotlands-dumbest-criminal/> - An article detailing the case of Darren Gibb, who was dubbed 'Scotland's dumbest criminal' by Sheriff Tim Niven-Smith after setting fire to himself while attempting to torch vehicles in Dundee. Gibb caused £42,000 worth of damage to multiple cars and was arrested with burn marks on his hand and petrol-smelling clothing. He pled guilty to three charges of wilful fire-raising, and sentencing was deferred for a report assessing the potential for an extended sentence and a supervised release order.
3. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/2939463/teens-torching-bins-dundee/> - An article reporting on five teenagers, aged between 14 and 16, who were caught on CCTV setting fire to bins outside shops in Dundee's Murraygate. The police launched an investigation into the anti-social behaviour and issued a warning to other youngsters. Sergeant Chris Grieve emphasized the dangers of setting fires and urged parents to monitor their children's activities.
4. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/1154962/hapless-montrose-thief-caught-beside-home-hed-broken-into-with-stolen-goods-and-covered-in-own-blood/> - An article about Stephen Gibb, a 24-year-old thief who was caught standing beside the Montrose home he had broken into, carrying stolen goods and covered in his own blood. Gibb had stolen various items, including slippers, beauty products, and electronics. He was arrested after leaving a trail of blood leading to the property and was later jailed for his crimes.
5. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/2938125/housebreaker-blood-trail-montrose/> - An article detailing the case of Stephen Gibb, a 26-year-old housebreaker who was caught after leaving a trail of blood from a Montrose property he had broken into. Gibb had smashed a mirror during the break-in and injured himself by falling through a kitchen window onto a sharp object. He was later jailed for 14 months for his crimes.
6. <https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2024/october/man-jailed-for-series-of-sexual-offences-in-fife/> - A Police Scotland press release announcing the sentencing of Darren Gibson, 32, to six years in prison for a series of sexual offences in Fife. The crimes, including the sexual abuse of women and children and domestic abuse offences, occurred at various locations in Fife between 2008 and 2019. Gibson had previously pled guilty at the High Court in Edinburgh.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-15875058> - A BBC News article reporting on Darren Heaney, 25, who was jailed for four years after starting a fire in a Dumbarton flat following an argument over deodorant. The blaze injured a man who jumped three floors to safety and affected a couple with young children. Heaney admitted to wilful fire-raising and was also ordered to be supervised for two years upon release.