



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
Public Safety Services

8181 Independence Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.lasfm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Deputy Chief Brant Thompson

Release#:

Office: 225-925-3661

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Cell: 225-247-6251

Month-Long Investigation Leads to the Arrest of Six in Oakdale Arsons

Three Firefighters Among Those Arrested

Oakdale, LA – A month-long investigation by the State Fire Marshal’s Office into a string of recent fires in Oakdale has resulted in the arrest of six individuals, three of which were Allen Parish volunteer firefighters.

In response to a rash of residential and commercial structure fires in Oakdale this year, State Fire Marshal investigators, with the full cooperation of Oakdale city officials, met individually with members of the fire department to discuss the fires and to provide instruction on how fire scenes should be handled, should there be additional fires.

These private discussions were also intended to provide an opportunity for firefighters to share their thoughts regarding the fires with an investigator in a confidential setting. During these conversations, several firefighters identified an Oakdale volunteer firefighter as a person of interest in a number of the blazes.

Later, after examining several months of fire department response logs, it was established that the firefighter in question, Johnny West, 21, from Oakdale, was often the first to respond when a fire dispatch was initiated. Afterward, investigators contacted and interviewed West, who denied any knowledge or involvement regarding the incidents.

Subsequently, other interviews resulted in obtaining the names of five additional individuals who, with West, were implicated in three fires, one of which occurred in May and two in early June. Two of the fires inflicted heavy damage to vacant houses on Locke Street and East Jackson Street, while the third damaged a commercial building located on Industrial Boulevard that the city of Oakdale utilizes for storage.

Of the six individuals charged, three served as volunteer firefighters with both the Oakdale and Allen Parish District 6 Fire Departments. Five of the six individuals charged ultimately confessed to their respective roles in setting the fires, while one refused to speak to investigators. No clear motive was established.

Other suspicious fires in Oakdale remain under investigation and additional arrests are possible.

The individuals charged are:

- Darryl Edward Blount; 18; Oakdale, LA
Simple Arson (1 count); Criminal Conspiracy (1 count)
- Thomas Lenox Gilbert (firefighter); 18; Elizabeth, LA
Simple Arson (3 counts); Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts); Simple Burglary (1 count)
- Bobby Wayne Murray (firefighter); 17; Oakdale, LA
Simple Arson (3 counts); Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts); Simple Burglary (1 count)
- Kenneth Jamal Sweet; 25; Oakdale, LA
Simple Arson (2 counts); Criminal Conspiracy (2 counts); Simple Burglary (1 count)
- Jeremy West; 20; Oakdale, LA
Simple Arson (3 counts); Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts); Simple Burglary (1 count)
- Johnny West (firefighter); 21; Oakdale, LA
Simple Arson (3 counts); Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts); Simple Burglary (1 count)

The State Fire Marshal's Office was assisted in the investigation by the Allen Parish Sheriff's Office.

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LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

News Release – Addendum (Oakdale Arson Arrests; 6/30/15)



Darryl Edward Blount; 18; Oakdale, LA

Simple Arson (1 count)
Criminal Conspiracy (1 count)



Thomas Lenox Gilbert; 18; Elizabeth, LA
(Firefighter)

Simple Arson (3 counts)
Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts)
Simple Burglary (1 count)



Bobby Wayne Murray; 17; Oakdale, LA
(Firefighter)

Simple Arson (3 counts)
Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts)
Simple Burglary (1 count)



Kenneth Jamal Sweet; 25; Oakdale, LA

Simple Arson (2 counts)
Criminal Conspiracy (2 counts)
Simple Burglary (1 count)



Jeremy West; 20; Oakdale, LA

Simple Arson (3 counts)
Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts)
Simple Burglary (1 count)



Johnny West; 21; Oakdale, LA
(Firefighter)

Simple Arson (3 counts)
Criminal Conspiracy (3 counts)
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