



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Four Arrested For Scheme To Burn House For Insurance Money

**LIVINGSTON PARISH**- Following a two-year long investigation, the Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal has arrested four people for conspiring to burn down a large home, belonging to one of the suspects, in Walker.

- Jerry Avants, Sr. (DOB 11/13/63), of Walker, was booked into the Livingston Parish Jail on one count of Arson with the Intent to Defraud
- Adrian Lee Everett (DOB 4/28/76), of Prairieville, was booked into the Livingston Parish Jail on one count each of Simple Arson and Arson with the Intent to Defraud
- Tammy Bankston Everett (DOB 12/3/76), of Prairieville, was booked into the Livingston Parish Jail on one count of Criminal Conspiracy to Commit Simple Arson
- Herman Severio (DOB 12/6/45), of Walker, was booked into the Livingston Parish Jail on one count each of Arson with the Intent to Defraud and Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon

The suspects were located and arrested in a multi-parish operation Thursday, August 23 in collaboration with the Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office, Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office, Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office and East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office.

In the early morning hours of July 17, 2016, the Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal was requested by Livingston Parish Fire District #6 to assist with determining the origin and cause of a structure fire in the 34000 block of Weiss Road.

The home, belonging to Avants, Sr., was a 6,700 sq. ft. structure. The home was unoccupied at the time of the fire as Avants, Sr. was out of town.

Investigators found several areas of origin throughout the heavily damaged home and eventually deemed the cause as incendiary. However, investigators also found the contents of the home were out of the ordinary, as there were no photos, as well as minimal clothing and food.

Through interviews with witnesses, it was learned that Avants, Sr. had made comments just prior to the fire about the large insurance policy he had on the home and having someone burn the home down.

Over the past two years, investigators have continued to work this case through its culmination Wednesday, August 23.

In an interview with investigators following the arrests, Everett confessed to setting the fire for Avants, who was a longtime friend and occasional employer of Everett's, in order to receive a part of the insurance payout. Everett told investigators all four suspects worked together to stage the home, but he lit the fire.

One suspect, Tabatha Bankston (DOB 12/3/79), remains at large and is believed to be out of state. A warrant remains outstanding for her arrest on one count of Criminal Conspiracy to Commit Simple Arson.

The OSFM would like to thank all of the assisting agencies for their partnership in closing this case.

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