



Office of the Washington County Attorney

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Man charged with arson, animal cruelty after multiple cats die in house fire

STILLWATER, MN -- An Oakdale man was charged in Washington County District Court Tuesday with first-degree arson and multiple counts of felony animal cruelty after he allegedly set fire to his home with multiple cats inside.

Joshua L. Buhl, 42, was reportedly under the influence of methamphetamine when he intentionally started a fire at his home late Sunday evening. Police were called to the 1100 block of Granada Ave in Oakdale just after 11:15 pm after neighbors called 911 to report the house on fire. Law enforcement arrived and located Buhl standing outside of his home holding a lighter. Buhl told authorities, "I started the fire," and made mention of narcotics in his pocket. When he began behaving erratically, officers took Buhl into custody.

Fire crews arrived and extinguished the flames, identifying the living room as the primary burn area with extensive smoke damage to the entire main level. Crews also spotted a red gas can inside the home and noted the front door was barricaded shut. Authorities recovered four or five living cats and they were surrendered to animal control. Multiple other cats were observed in the home deceased.

In a later interview, Buhl stated he started the fire to get law enforcement's attention and used the gas can and piece of cardboard to set the flames. He reported there were roughly 12 cats living in the home and did not consider they would die in the fire. During an execution of a search warrant the following day, a total of five cats were located deceased. Recovery efforts remain ongoing and additional charges may be forthcoming.

At his first court appearance Tuesday morning, Buhl was charged with one count of first-degree arson and five counts of felony animal cruelty. He remains in custody at the Washington County Jail on \$100,000 bail with his next court appearance scheduled for February 16th.

(Criminal complaint attached below this document)

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