



# SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT



## PROBABLE CAUSE STATEMENT

Date: 03/17/2010 Case #: 10-10308

I, Chris Barb, knowing that false statements on this form are punishable by law state as follows:

1. I have probable cause to believe that David A. Williams, W/M, DOB 01/30/1984, SSN [REDACTED] committed one or more criminal offenses.

2. The following crime(s) happened on 03/15/2010 at approximately 0423 hours at 1711 W. Olive St. in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri.

3. The facts supporting this belief are as follows:

It is alleged David Williams knowingly caused damage to an inhabitable structure by causing a fire to the residence at 1711 W. Olive St. It is also alleged David Williams placed the occupants of the structure in danger of death or serious physical injury by causing the fire. Three juvenile occupants of the structure died as a result of the fire. An adult male was also seriously injured as a result of the fire and remains in critical condition.

The Springfield/Greene County Emergency dispatch center received a call concerning a house fire at 1711 W. Olive St. at approximately 0423 hours on 03/15/2010. Emergency dispatch received information there was an adult male and three children still inside the burning residence. Emergency dispatch personnel sent members of the Springfield Fire Department to the address. Springfield Fire personnel arrived at 1711 W. Olive St. and located an active fire with the residence engulfed in flames. Fire personnel contacted two residents of the home, Violet Watson and David Williams, outside of the residence. Fire personnel were directed to the rear of the residence, where they were able to enter the residence and remove all occupants. Three juvenile victims (A.W. age 7, K. W. age 5, and D.W. age 4) removed from the residence were later pronounced deceased after being transported to the hospital. An adult male victim, Terrie Watson, was also transported to the hospital after being removed from the residence.

Williams provided a statement to Fire Marshall Kevin Binam at the scene after Fire personnel arrived. Williams reported he was awoken when Terrie Watson came to his bedroom and told him the residence was on fire. Williams reported he helped Violet Watson out of the residence. Williams reported he then attempted to help Terrie Watson get out of the residence but was unable to successfully remove Watson from the residence. Williams stated he left the residence and then entered again in an attempt to remove A.W., K. W., and D. W. from the second floor of the residence. Williams reported he was unable to scale the stairs to the second floor to remove the children from the residence.

Members of the Springfield Fire Department were able to extinguish the fire. Members of

the Springfield Fire Department were unable to locate an immediate source or cause of the fire. Members of the Springfield Fire Department and Springfield Police Department processed the fire-damaged residence in an attempt to locate or determine a cause of the fire. Members of the Springfield Fire Department observed suspicious "burn patterns" which led them to believe the fire was intentionally set through the use of an accelerant and not accidental.

Douglas Hanson is a neighbor who lives across the street from 1711 W. Olive St. Mr. Hanson reported that he was awakened by a loud boom, that he looked out one window and did not see anything and then looked out another window and saw flames on the front of 1711 W. Olive St. Mr. Hanson then called 911. According to Springfield Fire Marshall William Spence, the boom described by Mr. Hanson is consistent with a fire started with an accelerant.

State Fire Marshall Investigator Chris Thompson responded to 1711 W. Olive St. with his canine to assist with the investigation into the cause of the fire. Investigator Thompson stated he and his canine were certified in "Accelerant Detection." Investigator Thompson stated his canine "alerted" or indicated on the presence of an accelerant in three different locations of the residence. Investigator Thompson stated the alerts or indications were made on the front porch, the front entryway/door of the residence, and inside the living room area.

Springfield Fire Marshal William Spence also indicated he observed patterns on the front porch and living room floor that he believed were consistent with an ignitable liquid being "poured" and burned in those areas. This pour pattern starts in the living room just outside the bedroom door runs through the living room and then out the front door onto the porch. The bedroom door was consumed by the fire. The front porch is located on the South side of the house and ends at the Southeast corner of the house. A driveway runs down the East side of the house. A mostly empty gas can was found outside at the Northeast corner of the house near the East wall of the house.

On 03/15/2010 Detectives Todd King and Kevin Shipley, from the Springfield Police Department, contacted David Williams at St. John's Hospital. Detectives King and Shipley conducted an interview of Williams. Detectives King and Shipley collected a pair of Faded Glory jeans Williams reported he put on when Terrie Watson notified him of the fire inside the residence at 1711 W. Olive. Detectives King and Shipley did not observe any signs of injury on Williams' person. Detectives King and Shipley did not observe any signs of soot or singed hair on Williams' person. Detectives King and Shipley did not observe any soot on Mr. William's jeans. Detectives King and Shipley did not detect an odor of smoke upon Williams' person. Detectives King and Shipley did not observe any evidence on Williams' person to indicate he had been exposed to fire, extreme heat, or smoke. Detectives King and Shipley transported Williams' jeans to Police Headquarters. Springfield Fire Marshal William Spence reports that based upon his training and experience Mr. Williams should have had soot upon his clothing and person if he had made the entries into the house that he described.

On 03/15/2010 State Fire Marshall Investigator Thompson responded to Police Headquarters with his canine. Investigator Thompson utilized his canine partner in an attempt to determine if any accelerants were present on the jeans that detectives collected from Williams. Investigator Thompson reported his canine "alerted" or indicated the presence of an

accelerant on the right pant leg of the jeans.

On 03/16/2010, the Greene County Medical Examiner's office completed autopsies on A.W., K. W., and D.W. Information obtained from the Medical Examiner's office indicated the deaths of the three juveniles were the result of the fire at 1711 W. Olive St. A final autopsy report will be completed by the Boone/Callaway County Medical Examiner's office.

On 03/16/2010 I conducted an interview with David Williams at the Springfield Police Department. I advised Williams of the Miranda Rights and he agreed to speak with me. Williams reported he was awoken when Terrie Watson came to his bedroom and told him the residence was on fire. Williams reported that he opened the bedroom door to the living room and saw an orange glow at the front of the living room and that he shut that door. Williams reported he helped Violet Watson out of the residence through the bedroom door and hallway leading to the back door of the residence. Williams reported he then attempted to help Terrie Watson get out of the residence but was unable to successfully remove Watson from the residence. Williams stated he left the residence and then entered again in an attempt to remove A.W., K. W., and D. W. from the second floor of the residence. Williams reported he was unable to scale the stairs to the second floor to remove the children from the residence. Williams reported that during these various attempts to reenter the residence that he was at times crawling on his hands and knees.

The facts contained above are true.

Chris Bark  
Signature

1016  
DSN

Corporal  
Title