



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

8181 Independence Blvd. • Baton Rouge, LA 70806

www.lasfm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Public Affairs Division

PHONE: 225-620-5115
osfm.publicaffairs@la.gov

Two Arrested for Alto House Fire

RICHLAND PARISH (August 2, 2024)- State Fire Marshal Chief Bryan J Adams is announcing the arrest of two men accused of setting fire to a home in Alto.

John Spencer Johnston, 54 of Epps, was booked into the Richland Parish Jail on July 19 on one count each of Simple Arson, Criminal Conspiracy, Criminal Trespass, Simple Burglary, Obstruction of Justice and three counts of Possession of an Illegal Weapon.

Dewayne Williams, 44 of Delhi, was booked into the Richland Parish Jail on July 15 on one count each of Simple Arson and Criminal Conspiracy.

At 1:30 a.m. on May 14, the Alto Fire Department responded to a call for a house fire located on Antioch Road. The homeowner was out of town so no one was injured, but the house was destroyed.

During the investigation, deputies determined the fire was intentionally set and identified Johnston, a former boyfriend of the homeowner, as a suspect in the case. Following extensive investigative efforts, a warrant was obtained for his arrest. Johnston was located in Greenville, MS, by the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office and Washington County Sheriff's Office and he was taken into custody on the 16th. He was transferred to Richland Parish Jail on the 19th.

Williams was also identified through the investigation as having involvement. Following an interview with deputies, he was placed under arrest.

This investigation is ongoing and the public is welcome to offer any information about this case to the SFM's Arson Tipline at 1-844-954-1221 or online at lasfm.org.

Information can be shared anonymously.

The SFM thanks the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office, Washington County (MS) Sheriff's Office and the Richland Parish Sheriff's Office for their assistance with this case.

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