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White charged with burning home

By Charles Mattox
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A Carlisle woman who police say falsely reported a home invasion, shot herself, and then allegedly set her own house on fire in February, has been arrested.

Veteran Kentucky State Police Detective Clinton Graves, arrested Mary Willoughby White, 61, formerly of South Walnut Street, Carlisle, Monday morning at approximately 10:20 a.m.

White was charged with falsely reporting an incident and arson, second degree.

Police say other charges may follow as their investigation continues.

KSP Arson Investigator Curtis Combs joined Detective Graves at the Carlisle Police Station following White's arrest. The two have worked closely together since White's house burned just before mid-

night Feb. 25, and Graves reportedly praised Combs for his thoroughness and attention to detail, while gathering and processing critical evidence.

White told investigators and area media sources that two men, in dark clothing and wearing hoods "had in-

vented her home and started the fire.

She also told police that she confronted the two men while armed with a pistol and was shot during a confrontation between her self and the two. She told police she required consciousness later and discovered her house was on fire. She then dialed 911.

Carlisle Fire Chief Jeff Jefferson led a group of firefighters in battling the blaze, and Jefferson barely escaped serious injury when the floor collapsed beneath him, temporarily trapping him within the inferno.

Detective Graves shook his head in disgust while expressing his thoughts on the incident.

"There were literally hundreds of man hours wasted on this case looking for perpetrators that did not exist, and the way the case has developed, well, it's just a complete shame."

White's own statements to the police may have played a key role in unraveling the heinous crime.

Defendant (White) stated that she was actually aware of the identity of the two perpetrators and positively identified them to Affiant (Detective Graves), confirming the identity of one by photograph. White's arrest warrant states in part:

Graves learned that one of the two identified by White had been incarcerated in the Montgomery County Detention Center at the time in question, according to statements made on the arrest warrant.

Furthermore, Defendant (White) later admitted that she actually shot herself and was never truly unconscious."

the warrant reads.

White told police at one time during an interview, when her home was ablaze she said "What the f--- let it burn!" and then waited approximately 30 minutes before dialing 911, according to the arrest warrant.

The warrant also states that White "facilitated the starting of the fire with the intent of destroying her residence to collect or facilitate the collection of insurance proceeds."

When asked if the evidence against White was solid, Graves commented quickly.

"Absolutely. She wouldn't have been charged unless we had a solid case against her." Graves said there is a possibility that White was assisted.

"It's possible there was an accomplice involved," he said. "But we do not have enough evidence processes to suggest that aspect of the investigation at this time."

White was transported to the Montgomery County Detention Center where she has been released on \$15,000 cash bond.

Kentucky State Police Trooper Eric Barnett also assisted Graves during the investigation and arrest, and cautioned a belligerent member of White's family, later identified as Timmy Willoughby, who made threatening remarks to this reporter stating "there had better be no pictures taken" and the reporter "should leave immediately if he knew what was good for him."

Trooper Barnett warned Willoughby that if he said another word he would go to jail and the man became silent as this reporter continued taking pictures.



Photo by Charles Mattox

Mary White, also known as Mary Willoughby, of Carlisle, is led into the Carlisle Police Station Monday morning after her arrest for arson, second degree and falsely reporting an incident. White was released after posting a \$15,000 cash bond.

Apr
 9
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Local soldiers injured in Iraq

By Charles Mattox
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Three soldiers assigned to the Carlisle National Guard Unit, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, were injured this weekend when a thrown explosive device detonated very near their vehicle.

One of the injured is Sgt. Rodney Trussell, 25, of Carlisle. Sgt. Trussell is the son of Larry "Owl Head" Trussell and Shirley Trussell.

"He called me after it happened," Mrs. Trussell said Monday. "It happened about three o'clock in the morning Sunday morning over there. He was driving a truck and they were the last vehicle in

a convoy. They were returning to their camp when the explosion occurred."

According to Military Information Officer Major David Altom, the truck was struck with either a rocket propelled grenade or an explosive device thrown at the truck.

"My son said his truck was the only one hit," Mrs. Trussell said. "Rodney was driving and there were a total of two other soldiers in the

truck."

According to Mrs. Trussell, her son received injuries to his leg, face and back, but was able to restart the truck after the explosion and drive the vehicle out of the danger zone.

"Rodney has always been proud to be a soldier. He enlisted when he was 17 years old. I'd ask that everyone pray for him and for all the soldiers in his unit and all those serving over there."

Mrs. Trussell said it was a great relief for her and her husband to hear their son's voice and he sounded strong.

"But I knew when the phone rang and I heard his voice that something was wrong," she said. "I needed to hear his voice, and he said he wanted me and his father to hear the news from him first before they heard it somewhere else. He was more concerned about his fellow soldiers than he was himself."

Sgt. Trussell is currently recovering in a military hospital near the driver. Sgt. Trussell when the explosion occurred.

The second soldier injured has been identified as Staff Sgt. Daniel Peck of Fleming County. Peck is a 1981 graduate of Fleming County High School.

"Daniel called me after it happened and said the blast slammed him up against the roof of the vehicle and he got a cut over his eye," said his wife Brades. "He sounded strong, but said he was extremely sore and couldn't hear out of his left ear. I ask that people continue to pray for Daniel and all of the other soldiers. It means a lot to them and their family members also. I'm just looking forward to Daniel coming home. His five-year-old son J.D. misses his daddy so



Sgt. Rodney Trussell

much and so do I."

Peck was a passenger sitting near the driver. Sgt. Trussell when the explosion occurred.

The gunner of the vehicle, Specialist Kyle Strunk, 20, of McCreary County, received the brunt of the blast and after being assisted by Trussell and Peck was later evacuated to a US Army hospital in Germany.

"I talked with Kyle yesterday and he is doing great," said Strunk's mother Tina

Creekmore, in a press release issued by the Kentucky National Guard Monday. "He received a hairline fracture to his skull and has shrapnel and burn injuries to his upper body and hand."

Creekmore said her son was also a proud soldier and patriot.

"Kyle told me how a general officer pinned him with a Purple Heart Medal before he left Iraq. He is proud of what he has done while serving his country."

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Photo by Charles Mattox

Robert and Charlene Banta, owners of Ladobees Steak House present Mary Catharine Knapke with a \$1,000 corporate sponsorship check to help support this year's Relay for Life celebration.

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