



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three Arrested In Connection With Memorial Day Burglary and Arson

LINCOLN PARISH (June 13, 2018)- The Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal has arrested two men and a woman from the Ruston area for possessing and selling property stolen from a trailer that was eventually set on fire.

Steven Dale Ledford (DOB 10/31/86), who is already in the custody of the Lincoln Parish Jail, was re-booked Wednesday, June 13, for one count of Simple Arson, one count of Aggravated Burglary, one count of Criminal Trespassing and three counts of Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon.

Christopher "Chase" Smelley (DOB 5/17/96) and Grace Louise Hood (DOB 1/12/99) were booked into the Lincoln Parish Jail Tuesday, June 12, for Possession of Stolen Property.

On Monday morning, May 28, the OSFM was contacted by the Lincoln Parish Fire Department to assist in determining the origin and cause of a fire at a home in the 2600 block of Cook Road in Ruston.

The homeowner told investigators she noticed several oddities once the fire was extinguished, including multiple pieces of property missing and the front door being locked, which she says she never locks.

Investigators found two areas of origin for the fire and determined it to be incendiary.

On Monday, June 11, investigators tracked down Smelley and Hood, who were persons of interest in the case.

In an interview with investigators, Smelley admitted to accepting the property from Ledford to sell it for him. Smelley claimed Ledford admitted stealing the property and setting the trailer on fire.

The property, identified as being from the Cook Road trailer, included electronics and weapons.

Despite Smelley and Hood having sold some of the items already, investigators have recovered all of the property except one weapon and a poker set.

When Ledford interviewed with investigators, he admitted breaking into the trailer and making several trips to remove items and relocate them in the woods behind his residence. Ledford stated he was so high on drugs he doesn't remember how he set the fire.

This investigation is still on-going, but the OSFM would like to thank the Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office for their assistance and partnership in this case.

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