

Backherms charged with three counts of arson in December 4 incident

Written by Marty Randall

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Arthur Backherms has been charged with three counts of arson, all Class B felonies, in connection with a bizarre incident at his home on December 4.

Backherms, 49, appeared before Judge Roger Duvall in Scott Circuit Court on Friday afternoon, December 20. His charges from the strange case also include criminal mischief.

The arson charges are based upon the fact that Backherms was not the sole owner of the house he reportedly tried to burn down on that Wednesday, explained County Prosecutor Jason Mount. One charge covers the supposition that Backherms set the fire; second and third charges involve the fact that his alleged actions would have destroyed both the structure and personal property which he did not own.

A fourth charge, that of criminal mischief, was also scheduled to be filed against him. That charge covers his alleged actions at Scott Memorial Hospital, where he reportedly damaged a hospital bed while emergency room staff was trying to treat him.

A call to the 9-1-1 dispatching center originally brought deputies Rex Herald and Joe Johnson to the house on East Johnny Johnson Road.

An unidentified male caller, apparently Backherms, announced that he had started a fire in the house and was not going to leave the building.

Deputies Herald and Johnson broke through a locked back door to rescue the man. Backherms reportedly resisted their efforts, struggling to return to the burning house. He also told them that "...if he wasn't welcome in his own house, then no one was..." according to the probable cause affidavit.

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Backherms was subdued and then transported by Scott County EMS to Scott Memorial Hospital. There, he allegedly damaged a hospital bed after becoming unruly.

Backherms is now scheduled for a jury trial on the charges on April 8, but, during his initial hearing, the man requested that he be released on his own recognizance instead of continuing to be held in jail in lieu of a \$50,000 corporate surety bond/full cash. Judge Duvall declined to release him, instead appointing him a public defender and urging the man's wife to contact a mental health agency which has worked with Backherms in the past.