

JUSTICE COURT GALLATIN
COUNTY JUL28'21AM6:48

IN THE JUSTICE COURT OF THE COUNTY OF GALLATIN,
IN AND FOR THE STATE OF MONTANA

THE STATE OF MONTANA
Plaintiff,

Cause No. _____

v.

AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

LARSON, JENNIFER MICHELE LEIGH

STATE OF MONTANA)
 :SS
County of Gallatin)

COMES NOW Detective Dave Ferguson and being first duly sworn upon oath,
deposes and says:

1. Your affiant is a(n) Detective with the Bozeman Police Department in Gallatin County, Montana.
2. On 7/27/21 your affiant arrested the above-named defendant and charged the defendant with the crimes of:

45-6-103 - Arson Exceeds Value Of \$1,500

3. The crime(s) occurred on 7/27/21.
4. The place of the crime was at 206 S MCADOW AVE, Bozeman, Montana.

5. The facts relied upon to make the arrest and charge(s) are as follows:

On July 27, 2021 Bozeman officers along with Bozeman Fire and AMR responded to 206 South Mcadow. A caller, later identified as Jennifer Larson, told dispatch a person had come into her house, assaulted her and put a zip tie around her neck, then started the house on fire. Larson was not clear as to if the burglar was still in the house. Officers arrived on scene and found Larson, hereafter the defendant, trying to get out a bedroom window. Officers assisted the defendant and removed a zip tie from around her neck. Other officers cleared the house with Bozeman Fire as it was still unclear if there was an assailant inside.

The defendant was taken to Bozeman Health ER where she received medical treatment and photos were taken. Your affiant advised the defendant of her Miranda Rights which she chose to waive and consent to an interview. Your affiant interviewed the defendant who said she was home alone as her husband and daughter were out of town. She was sleeping in her daughter's room and heard the sound of glass breaking. She went into the hallway and saw a male there. She described the male as the same man who

had broken into her house on November 3, 2020. (Bozeman officers had responded to this as well and after searching the residence and surrounding area no suspect was ever developed.) The defendant said the burglar struck her in the face spinning her around. The burglar then put a zip tie around the defendant's neck at which point the defendant passed out. The defendant said she woke up in the doorway of her daughter's room and saw the house was on fire.

The defendant said she closed the bedroom door, called 911, and was attempting to get out of the window when officers arrived. The defendant stated after closing the door she never left the bedroom. While officers and fire personnel were clearing the house to look for the suspect and extinguish the fire they found a purse in the bedroom the defendant had been in. This purse contained various form of important documentations such as birth certificates, passports etc. for the defendant and her family. The defendant explained she often takes all this documentation with her whenever she leaves town. The defendant stated she was leaving in a couple of days to join her husband and would be gone for one night then return home. On the bed in this bedroom was found a butane lighter. The defendant's husband later confirmed this lighter was one of a pack of four he had recently bought, one of which was missing from the kitchen drawer. The defendant had also managed to save the family cat. She stated the bedroom happened to have a cat carrier in it and the cat happened to also be under the bed in this room. The defendant explained the house is owned by the Salvation Army, not herself or her family.

A search of the house by your affiant, who is part of the arson investigation team, found 3 different ignition points in the house along with a gas can and two lighter fluid bottles in the vicinity. There was one ignition point downstairs, one on the couch in the living room, and a third in the bedroom of the defendant and her husband. At that point it was the opinion of the combined Bozeman Fire and Bozeman Police arson investigation team the fire was caused by arson.

The defendant had consented to a search of her cell phone device. While reviewing this your affiant, looked at recent Google searches by the defendant. Your affiant found the defendant had searched at approximately 7:45 pm on July 26, 2021 "If exposed to fire will my gas boiler explode, Will a boiler explode during a house fire, Visited Boiler Explosions, If my house catches on fire will my boiler explode." Your affiant further found at approximately 9:23 pm on this same date the defendant searched, "how hard does it have to be to cause a concussion?, rear naked choke bruising, Does a rear naked choke leave a bruise around t..., Visited Concussion: Causes Symptoms, Diagnosis"

Your affiant called the defendant and asked her to come to the Law and Justice Center which she did for an interview. Your affiant asked the defendant about the terms she had searched hours before calling in the assault and fire. The defendant said she had been watching a true crimes show and that is why she had been looking up these things. The defendant went on to say her medications had gotten off the previous day and she could not clearly recall all that happened. As we reviewed the investigation, the defendant speculated perhaps the burglar had not been real but she was not sure. The defendant described a series of stresses she has been under and the strain of multiple projects and breakages at the home. When asked about the evidence as a whole the defendant acknowledged it lead to her setting the fire and staging the assault but she could not recall specifically. The defendant was placed under arrest for Arson and escorted to the Gallatin Co Detention Center where she was held on no bond.

Your affiant is aware 45-6-103. Arson. (1) A person commits the offense of arson when, by means of fire or explosives, the person knowingly or purposely:

(a) damages or destroys a structure, vehicle, personal property (other than a vehicle) that exceeds \$1,500 in value, crop, pasture, forest, or other real property that is property of another without consent;

(b) damages or destroys a structure, vehicle, crop, pasture, forest, or other property that the person owns or has a possessory interest in, with the purpose of obtaining a pecuniary or other gain through fraud or deception; or

(c) places another person in danger of death or bodily injury, including a firefighter responding to or at the scene of a fire or explosion.

(2) A person convicted of the offense of arson shall be imprisoned in the state prison for a term not to exceed 20 years or be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000, or both.

Dated 7-28-2021

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct:

Signature of Affiant



ORDER

Upon reading the foregoing Affidavit, the Court finds that there is probable cause to believe that the above - named defendant committed the crime(s) charged.

DATED this ____ day of _____, 20____ at _____ a.m./p.m.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE/CITY JUDGE

ORDER

Upon reading the foregoing Affidavit:

____ IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT probable cause is **found** to charge the above-named defendant with the following charge(s):

____ IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT probable cause is **not found** to charge the above-named defendant with the following charge(s):

DATED this ____ day of _____, 20____ at _____ a.m./p.m.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE