



Pueblo County Sheriff's Office

Kirk M. Taylor Sheriff
J.R. Hall Undersheriff

Mark A. Mears
Bureau Chief
Emergency Services

David J. Lucero
Bureau Chief
Law Enforcement

Paul Toth
Bureau Chief
Detention

News Release

For Immediate Release
Contact: Gayle Perez 719 924 5471

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Man Arrested After Commanding Dog to Attack Deputies While They Checked His Welfare

Pueblo, CO: A 45-year-old convicted felon who commanded his dog to attack Pueblo County Sheriff's deputies as they were checking on his welfare early Sunday morning was arrested for assault and felony arson after deputies learned he also tried to set his Pueblo West house on fire.

Deputies responded to a home in the 400 block of Woodstock Lane at about 1 a.m. Sunday after a family member called for a welfare check on a man later identified as Burnest Johnson. The family member reported that Johnson was breaking items and fire alarms were going off in the home.

When deputies arrived, they contacted Johnson, who was outside the home, and told him they were there to check on him. Johnson refused to speak to deputies and said he was going to get a weapon. Deputies concerned for their safety as well as for Johnson, who appeared to be intoxicated, attempted to detain him. Johnson refused verbal commands to comply and shouted a command in a foreign language to his dog. The dog subsequently attacked a deputy, biting her on the back of the leg. The deputy suffered minor injuries. A Taser was deployed and Johnson was taken into custody.

Deputies went inside the home to speak to a family member where they smelled a strong odor of gasoline. They discovered there had been a fire on the back porch of the home, which burned a deck and scorched a portion of the house. Deputies and Pueblo West Fire personnel, who also responded to the home, discovered there were signs the fire was intentionally set. When deputies initially arrived at the home, they saw Johnson throw a gas can into the garage. They also found Johnson in possession of two lighters. The fire caused an estimated \$10,000 damage to the property.

Johnson, who is on parole, was arrested for first-degree arson, second-degree assault on a peace officer, domestic violence, a protection order violation and a parole hold. He was booked into the Pueblo County Jail.

The investigation into this incident is ongoing.

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