

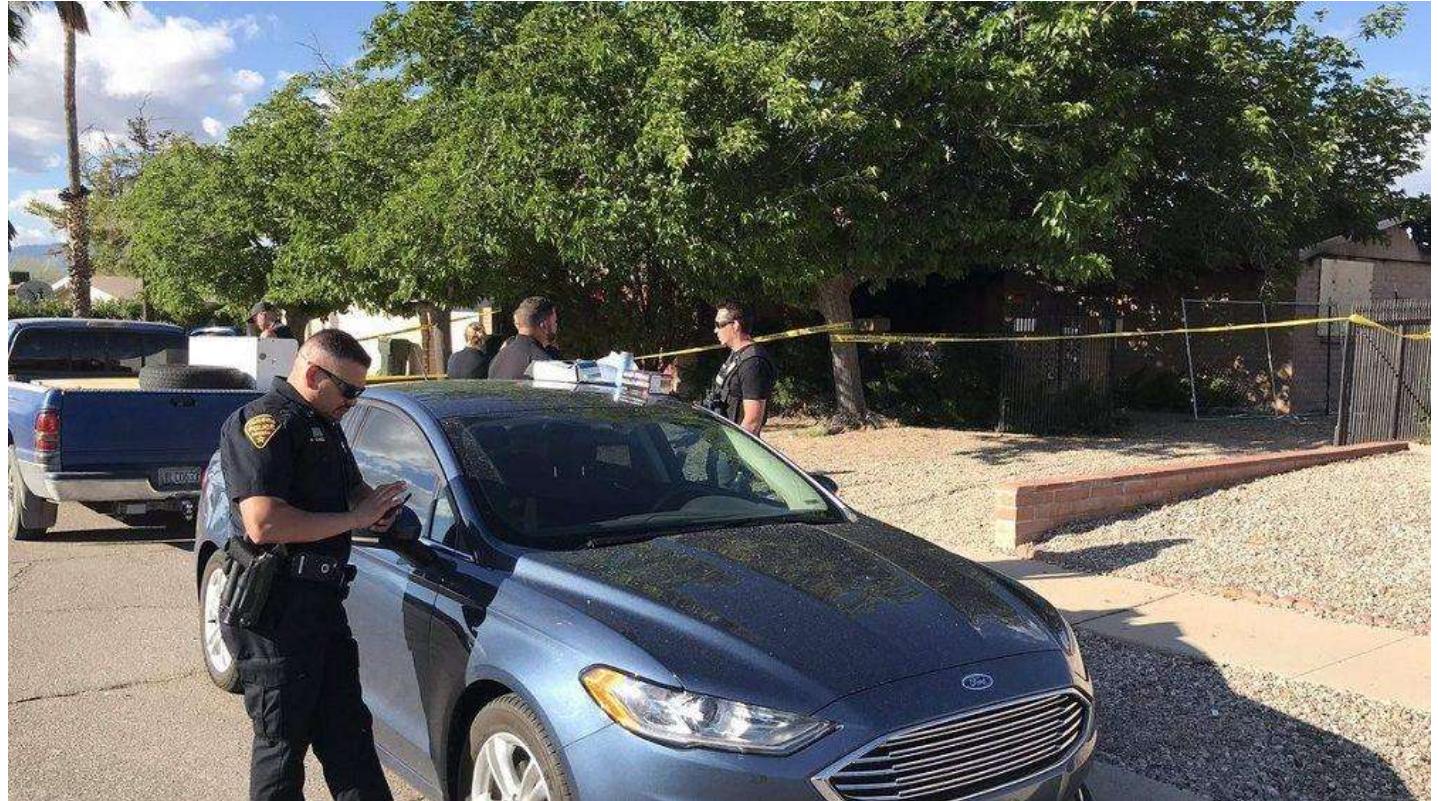
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Police investigate suspicious house fire, owner is missing

News 4 Tucson

Apr 17, 2019



By WPTA

The mystery intensifies Wednesday night just as the flames did at a house on Calexico Street on the east side near Camino Seco early Tuesday morning.

TUCSON – The mystery intensifies as the flames did at an east side home Tuesday morning.

Fire crews were dispatched to a residence in the 3500 block of S. Calexico Avenue, just before 4 a.m. after receiving multiple 911 calls.

Firefighters and detectives are now investigating what happened. At this time, the homeowner is nowhere to be found.

Christian Novellino lives two doors down.

“We ran over there and started banging on the door and by that time the house was engulfed in a big old fireball,” Novellino said.

Investigators say it is difficult to search the home because the foundation is unstable.



Tucson Fire Department responded to a home in 3500 block of S. Calexico Avenue on Tuesday, April 16, 2019. Courtesy: Tucson Fire Department

“I only met him in passing while we were walking our dogs,” Novellino said. “We’d wave to each other and say hello and that was about as far as I got to meeting the gentleman.”

A dog escaped the fire and was taken to the Pima Animal Care Center.

“This is truly strange,” Novellino said. “This isn’t something that happens on this block. On a scale of 1 to 10, this is an 8 of weirdness.”

Tags

[Christian Novellino](#) [Police](#) [Social Services](#) [Building Industry](#) [Firefighter](#) [Detective](#) [Dog](#) [Homeowner](#)
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Homicide being investigated in suspicious east side fire

By Anthony Victor Reyes

May 14, 2019

The mysterious fire that occurred at an east side home mid-April was ruled as arson Tuesday, according to Tucson Police Department.

TUCSON – The mysterious fire that occurred at an east side home mid-April was ruled as arson Tuesday, according to Tucson Police Department.

Tucson Fire Department responded to a house fire in the 3500 block of South Calexico Avenue on April 16. TFD said the fire caused a large section of the house's roof to collapse into the structure.

The mystery intensifies Wednesday night just as the flames did at a house on Calexico Street on the east side near Camino Seco early Tuesday morning.

At the time of the initial investigation, the owner of the home could not be located.



Tucson Fire Department responded to a home in 3500 block of S. Calexico Avenue on Tuesday, April 16, 2019. Courtesy: Tucson Fire Department

On Tuesday, TPD revealed a vehicle was missing from the home. After further investigation, Pima County Sheriff's Department located the vehicle and suspected foul play.

The owner of the vehicle was identified as Frank Bligh.



Frank Bligh/ Tucson Police Department

By Noel Sederstrom

The 72-year-old is currently missing and presumed dead.

TPD has since labeled the fire as arson. The department also said a homicide is being investigated in reference to the incident.

An arrest has been made in connection to the incident. TPD located Brent Mallard in Maricopa County and took him into custody on charges including arson, second-degree burglary and felony criminal damages.

He is currently being extradited to Pima County.



Brent Mallard, Susan Barksdale and Blane Barksdale/ Tucson Police Department

Mallard's uncle and aunt are sought in connection to the case. Police say Blane and Susan Barksdale are wanted for first-degree murder.

Anyone with information is advised to call 911 or 88-CRIME.

This is a developing story.

EDITOR'S NOTE: News 4 Tucson's Lupita Murillo contributed to this report.



TPD: Location of Frank Bligh's remains learned after suspects pleaded guilty in his death

Tags

Brent Mallard Arson Tucson Police Department Crime Criminal Law Police Pima County Department
Homicide Vehicle

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Police: 2 arrested for murder, suspicious east side home fire

By News 4 Tucson

May 24, 2019

upLynk Clip

TUCSON – Two suspects in connection to a mysterious Tucson house fire in April have been arrested in New York, police say.



Brent Mallard, Susan Barksdale and Blane Barksdale/ Tucson Police Department

According to NBC affiliate WHEC in Rochester, the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force and the Monroe County Sheriff's deputies arrested Blane, 55, and Susan Barksdale, 58, Friday morning.

Both fugitives were wanted in the death of 72-year-old Frank Bligh.

On April 16, Tucson Fire Department responded to a house fire in the 3500 block of South Calexico Avenue. Fire officials said the fire caused a large section of the house's roof to collapse into the structure.

Initially, the owner of the home could not be located.

On May 14, police revealed a vehicle was missing from the home. After further investigation, Pima County Sheriff's Department located the vehicle and suspected foul play. The owner of the vehicle was identified as 72-year-old Frank Bligh.

Tucson Police Department located Brent Mallard, the couple's nephew, in Maricopa County and took him into custody on charges including arson, second-degree burglary and felony criminal damages.

Police are still asking anyone with information about this case to call 911 or 88-CRIME.

Tags

[Owner](#) [Vehicle](#) [Police](#) [Crime](#) [Criminal Law](#) [Foul Play](#) [Fugitive](#) [Frank Bligh](#) [Monroe County](#)

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Crime Trackers: Fugitive couple wanted for murder, arson is arrested in New York

By Lupita Murillo

May 24, 2019

The fugitive couple wanted for murder and arson are now behind bars.

TUCSON – The fugitive couple wanted for murder and arson is now behind bars.

Tucson Police Department said 55-year-old Blane Barksdale and his 58-year-old wife, Susan Barksdale were arrested Friday morning in Henrietta New York.



Blane Barksdale, Susan Barksdale, and Brent Mallard, / Tucson Police Department

According to Charles Salina, U.S. Marshal, they received a call from their counterparts in Tucson on Thursday night.

“They sent us a photo of the vehicle and photos of the two fugitives,” Salina said.

Undersheriff Korey Brown said the license plate on the RV the couple were driving alerted Tucson authorities. The couple also used a credit card in Henrietta.



Tucson Police Department

It just so happened their fugitive task force was in the area.

Brown said because the couple was armed and considered dangerous, they called the SWAT team.

Authorities in New York said it was a joint effort and the different agencies communicating with each other is what made the arrests a success. They were able to get the murder suspects off the streets.

The couple is charged with the death of 72-year-old Frank Bligh. Tucson police said on April 16, Tucson Fire responded to his house in 3500 block of South Calexico.

Fire officials said the blaze caused a large section of the roof to collapse. They said the cause was arson.

Initially, Bligh could not be located, his car was missing. The following day, Pima County Sheriff's Department found the vehicle. TPD detectives searched it and suspected foul play.

Their investigation also led them to Brent Mallard in Maricopa County. They arrested him and brought him to Tucson. He is charged with second-degree burglary and felony criminal damages.

He was said to be related to the Barksdale's.

The couple is each charged with first-degree murder, first-degree burglary, arson, felony criminal damage and auto theft.

Tucson police are scheduled to go to New York and search the RV the couple was in.

No word on when the Barksdale's will return to Tucson.

Tags

Arson Fugitive Korey Brown Crime Criminal Law Police Couple Felony Theft Burglary

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Couple accused of murder being transported back to Arizona

By Aalia Shaheed

May 30, 2019



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TUCSON – Blane and Susan Barksdale appeared for an extradition hearing in a New York courtroom on Thursday.

The two waived their extradition and are set to return to Arizona. The couple is accused of killing an elderly man and setting an east side home on fire.

They are facing first-degree murder, burglary and arson charges for the death of 72-year-old Frank Bligh. His remains have yet to be found and his death is being investigated as a homicide.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call 911 or 88-CRIME.

Tags

Arson First-degree Murder Extradition Couple Crime Criminal Law Law Police Burglary Arizona
Susan Barksdale

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Tucson murder suspects escape while being extradited to Pima County

By Julia Leon

Aug 27, 2019



Blane and Susan Barksdale/ Courtesy: Tucson Police Department

Two Tucson murder suspects escaped from a van while being extradited from Henrietta, NY to Pima County, according to Tucson Police Department.

TUCSON –Two Tucson murder suspects escaped from a van while being extradited from Henrietta, NY to Pima County, according to Tucson Police Department.

Officials say Blane, 56, and Susan Barksdale, 59, “overpowered” two security officers with Security Transport Services (STS) and took possession of the van in Blanding, Utah.

Mayoral and city council races

Investigators say they have information that the couple is possibly traveling through Arizona. They were last seen driving a red GMC Sierra pickup with Arizona license plate: 127XTY. Police say the vehicle has damage to the front passenger side and rear bumper.

Both are facing first-degree murder, burglary and arson charges for the death of 72-year-old Frank Bligh.

Officials said the van was found north of St. Johns. The Barksdales’ direction of travel is unknown, police say.

The suspects are believed to be armed and dangerous and should not be approached, police say.

Tucson Police Department located Brent Mallard, the couple’s nephew, in Maricopa County and took him into custody on charges including arson, second-degree burglary and felony criminal damages.



Blane Barksdale, Susan Barksdale, and Brent Mallard,/ Tucson Police Department

RELATED: Police: 2 arrested for murder, suspicious east side home fire

Anyone with information is urged to call 911 or 88-CRIME.



TPD: Location of Frank Bligh's remains learned after suspects pleaded guilty in his death

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Tip leads to capture of escaped suspects of Tucson murder

By News 4 Tucson

Sep 12, 2019



Blane and Susan taken into custody on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019 by the U.S. Marshalls in Gila County. Courtesy: Navajo County Sheriff's Office.

By Julia Leon



Blane and Susan taken into custody on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019 by the U.S. Marshalls in Gila County. Courtesy: Navajo County Sheriff's Office.

PHOENIX – The U.S. Marshal for the District of Arizona has announced the capture of two escaped fugitives wanted for a Tucson murder.

Barksdales behind bars

According to a news release, U.S. Marshals captured Blane and Susan Barksdale on Wednesday after a tip led authorities to Punkin Center in Tonto Basin.

The two were booked into jail in Florence Wednesday evening and were extradited to Tucson for a court appearance Thursday afternoon. During their court appearance, the judge dismissed two complaints and allowed for the couples' transfer into Pima County's custody.

Authorities say the homeowner of the residence where Blane and Susan Barksdale were found is an acquaintance of the couple. The homeowner reportedly has a criminal history of drug convictions.

The couple has been on the run since Aug. 26, when they escaped from a transport van during extradition from New York to Pima County.

The Barksdales are facing charges in the April murder of Frank Bligh.

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UPDATE:

Both Blane and Susan Barksdale are being held on million-dollar bonds and will appear in superior court for arraignment on September 19 at 1:30 p.m.

Officials wanted the couple separated due to their previous escape together.

April 16, 2019 Tucson Fire Department responded to a home fire early Tuesday morning. Fire crews were dispatched to a residence in the 3500 block of S. Calexico Avenue, just before 4 a.m. after receiving multiple 911 calls. [Full Story](#)

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Aug. 26, 2019 Blane and Susan Barksdale escape from custody after overpowering the security guards that were accompanying the couple back to Tucson from New York. The two were in Blanding, Utah when they broke out of custody. [Full Story](#)

Aug. 28, 2019 Pima County Sheriff's Department has suspended the use of a private contractor pending a review after two suspects escaped their custody. Security Transport Services was extraditing Blane and Susan Barksdale from Henrietta, NY to Pima County when they escaped. [Full Story](#)

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Sept. 13, 2019 Brent Mallard pleaded guilty to arson Friday morning after he allegedly burned down the home of 72-year-old Frank Bligh back in April. Court officials said Mallard will be released to pretrial services and was ordered to reside with his mother. [Full Story](#)

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Tucson man presumed dead remembered by family

By Denelle Confair

Sep 13, 2019



By Denelle Confair

The Barksdales are being charged with the murder of 72-year-old Frank Bligh who went missing back in April. His body still has not been found.

TUCSON – A massive manhunt is over. Blane and Susan Barksdale are now back in custody.

The

Barksdales

are being charged with the murder of 72-year-old Frank Bligh who went missing back in April. His body still has not been found.

Bligh is being remembered as a loving brother, a good neighbor, and a Vietnam veteran. For Bligh's family, all they have is just a few pictures and memories ever since his house and belongings were burned in a fire last April.

Bligh's older brother William Bligh says the last time he talked to him was in April. Little did he know he'd never talk to him again.

"We lost contact with my brother on April 7 and I tried to get a hold of him for over a week and I couldn't get a hold of him," William Bligh said.

William said that Susan Barksdale was friends with Bligh and that once she got married to Blane he told his sister something didn't seem right anymore.

"They were looking for money and they wanted all of his guns," William Bligh said.

Now that the Barksdales are behind bars, his family and even his neighbors are hoping for justice.

"I know that the law will do its justice and they'll spend the rest of their lives in prison," Chris Novellino, Bligh's neighbor said.

Police also arrested the Barksdale's nephew Brent Mallard, who they say lit Bligh's home on fire back in April.

"I'm happy that they are caught," Novellino said, "I'm sad that they did this to him. I wish that they didn't. It's a tragedy."

While most of Bligh's belongings were destroyed in the fire, his family and neighbors continue to honor his memory.

“Yes, we don’t have those physical things anymore. We’ll never get them back. They’ll never happen ever again,” Novellino said, “We do have the memories and that’s important and it’s just as cherishable as the photographs.”

“He’s a Vietnam Vet, he’s served in Vietnam. He got on the Air Force Reserves. He served his country,” William Bligh said, “I don’t think I’ve ever once heard him say anything bad about anybody. Even Sue(Susan Barksdale) he really liked Sue and everything that she did. But as far as I’m concerned, when she met Blane she turned into the black widow.”

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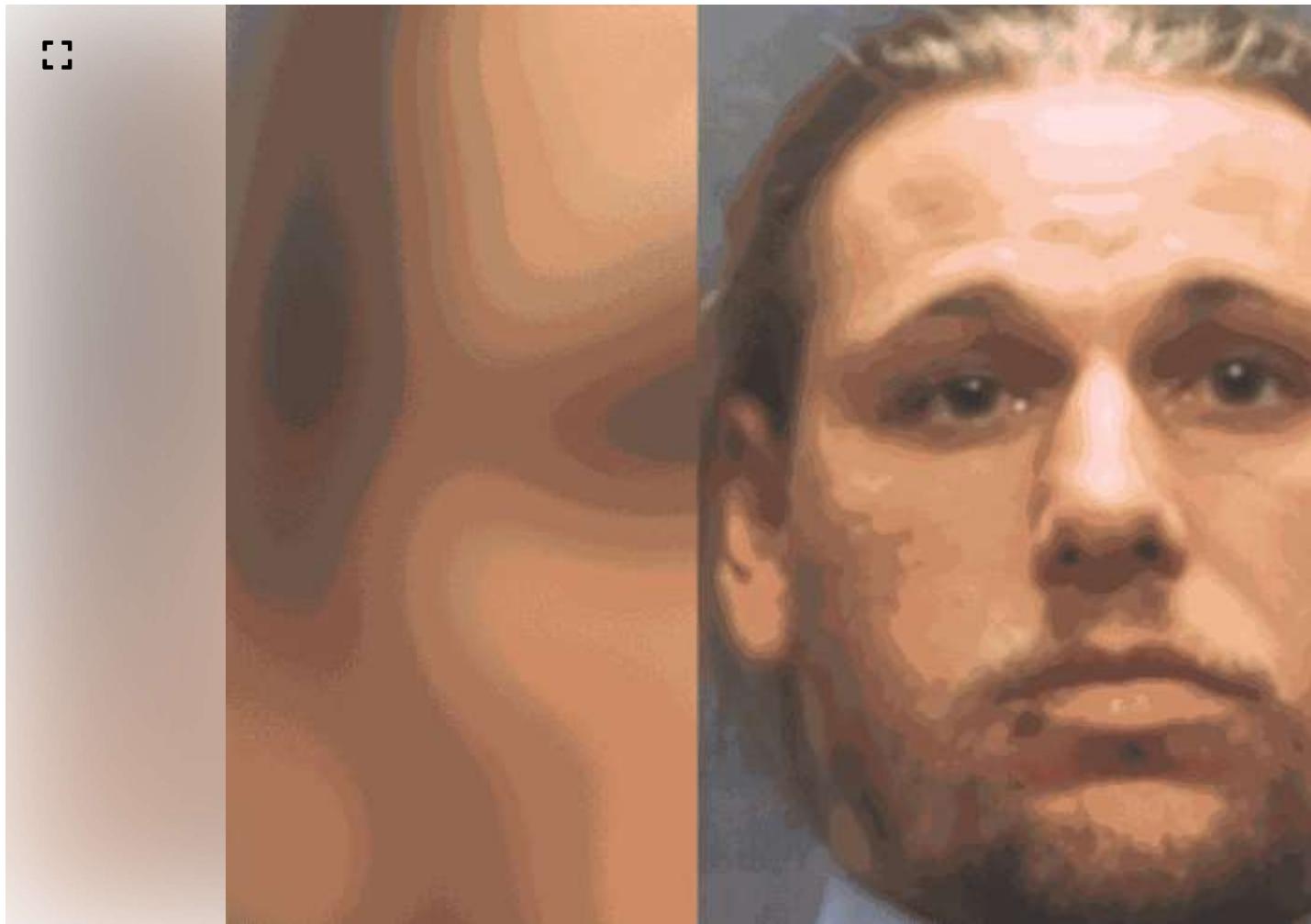
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Barksdale Case: Man pleads guilty to arson of victim's home

By Anthony Victor Reyes

Sep 13, 2019



Brent Mallard/Pima County Sheriff's Department

By Anthony Victor Reyes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mswwyrxCn0o&feature=youtu.be>

TUCSON – A man pleaded guilty to arson Friday morning after he allegedly burned down the home of 72-year-old Frank Bligh back in April.

According to court documents, Brent Mallard was arrested for arson, second-degree burglary and felony criminal damages in April in connection to a mysterious fire at a home in the 3500 block of S. Calexico Avenue. The fire reportedly caused a large section of the house's roof to collapse.

Investigators later identified Bligh as the owner of the home. After he could not be located, law enforcement found his vehicle and suspected foul play. Pima County Sheriff's Department then named Mallard's aunt and uncle, Blane and Susan Barksdale as suspects for his alleged murder.

RELATED: Tip leads to capture of escaped suspects of Tucson murder

Court officials said Mallard will be released to pretrial services and was ordered to reside with his mother.

The next court date is scheduled for Nov. 8.

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Barksdale Case: Court denies bond request for murder suspect

By Anthony Victor Reyes

Sep 26, 2019



Susan Barksdale / Courtesy: Navajo County Sheriff's Office

By Julia Leon

TUCSON – A judge denied a bond request for the woman accused of murdering 72-year-old Frank Bligh Thursday morning.

On May 24, Susan Barksdale and her husband Blane were taken into custody in Rochester, NY for first-degree murder after police suspected foul play in connection to an arson investigation at Bligh's home back in April.

Susan and Blane allegedly escaped from custody when they were being extradited back to Tucson in August. The two were located and arrested on Sept. 12.

On Thursday, Susan Barksdale appeared in court to request a modification to her release conditions. The court denied this request and affirmed her bond.

Barksdale's bond was originally set at \$1 million.

Her next court date is scheduled for Oct. 21.

Tags

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https://www.kvoa.com/news/local/change-of-venue-motion-denied-in-barksdale-case/article_56817db9-e14e-5796-b678-a94a0de4e24d.html

Change of venue motion denied in Barksdale case

By Carla Litto

Dec 9, 2019



Blane and Susan Barksdale/ Courtesy: Tucson Police Department

TUCSON - Susan Barksdale's plea for change of venue was denied by Pima County Superior Judge Danelle Liwski on Monday morning.

The judge ruled as to both defendants, although Blane had not officially joined the motion, according to Krisanne M. LoGalbo, the community relations coordinator and public information officer for Arizona Superior Court in Pima County.

Blane Barksdale, along with his counsel, was present during the hearing to gather information in regards to his case.

The attorney's for both defendants were given leave to raise the issue again if new circumstances warrant, according to Krisanne M. LoGalbo, the community relations coordinator and public information officer for Arizona Superior Court in Pima County.

The next hearing is a status conference on Dec. 30 at 11 a.m.

According to a news release, U.S. Marshals captured Blane and Susan Barksdale on Sept. 11 after a tip led authorities to Punkin Center in Tonto Basin.

The two were booked into jail in Florence and were extradited to Tucson for a court appearance.

During their court appearance, the judge dismissed two complaints and allowed for the couples' transfer into Pima County's custody.

Authorities say the homeowner of the residence where Blane and Susan Barksdale were found is an acquaintance of the couple.

The homeowner reportedly has a criminal history of drug convictions.

The couple has been on the run since Aug. 26, when they escaped from a transport van during extradition from New York to Pima County.

The Barksdales are facing charges in the April murder of Frank Bligh.

Tags

[Change Of Venue](#) [Susan Barksdale](#) [Blane Barksdale](#) [Danelle Liwski](#) [Law](#) [Criminal Law](#) [Pima County](#)
[Authority](#) [Homeowner](#)

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Susan Barksdale pleads guilty to manslaughter in mysterious house fire case

Anthony Victor Reyes

Nov 16, 2021



Tucson Police Department

TUCSON (KVOA) - The woman who prompted a nationwide manhunt after escaping custody in 2019 pleaded guilty in connection to the death of a Tucson man on Wednesday.

Back on April 16, 2019, Tucson Fire Department responded to a house fire in the 3500 block of South Calexico Avenue. Fire officials said the fire caused a large section of the house's roof to collapse into the structure.

Initially, the owner of the home could not be located. However, on May 14, 2019, police revealed a vehicle was missing from the home. After further investigation, Pima County Sheriff's Department located the vehicle and suspected foul play. The owner of the vehicle was identified as 72-year-old Frank Bligh.

After their nephew Brent Mallard was arrested in connection to the fire, police named Susan and Blane Barksdale as suspects in the death of Bligh.

The two were arrested in New York on May 24, 2019. However, the couple escaped from transport van during extradition from New York to Pima County on Aug. 26, 2019. After avoiding capture for 16 days, Susan and Blane Barksdale were located at a residence in the Punkin Center, located near Tonto Basin, Ariz.

In court documents obtained by News 4 Tucson on Tuesday, Susan Barksdale reportedly entered a plea agreement in connection to the case.

The documents say she pleaded guilty to on count of manslaughter.

Susan's sentencing will be held on Dec. 10.

Have a news tip or would like to report a typo? Email Anthony Victor Reyes at areyes@kvoa.com.

Tags

[Susan Barksdale](#) [Criminal Law](#) [Crime](#) [Law](#) [Vehicle](#) [Pima County](#) [Police](#) [Owner](#) [Blane Barksdale](#)
[Plea](#) [Manslaughter](#)

Anthony Victor Reyes

Lead Web Content Producer

Anthony Victor Reyes is the lead digital content producer at News 4 Tucson. The award-winning journalist previously worked as a community reporter in Jasper County, Iowa.

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https://www.kvoa.com/news/local/man-pleads-guilty-to-second-degree-murder-in-2019-house-fire-case/article_7e7c2f06-5d16-11ec-9fba-979fb2b52956.html

Man pleads guilty to second-degree murder in 2019 house fire case

News 4 Tucson

Dec 14, 2021



Blane Barksdale

TUCSON (KVOA) - A man involved in a 2019 house fire case pled guilty to second-degree murder Tuesday.

Back on April 16, 2019, Tucson Fire Department responded to a house fire in the 3500 block of South Calexico Avenue. Fire officials said the fire caused a large section of the house's roof to collapse into the structure.

Initially, the owner of the home could not be located. However, on May 14, 2019, police revealed a vehicle was missing from the home. After further investigation, Pima County Sheriff's Department located the vehicle and suspected foul play. The owner of the vehicle was identified as 72-year-old Frank Bligh.

After their nephew Brent Mallard was arrested in connection to the fire, police named Susan and Blane Barksdale as suspects in the death of Bligh.

After escaping custody, the couple prompted a nationwide manhunt. The two were arrested in New York on May 24, 2019. However, the couple escaped from transport van during extradition from New York to Pima County on Aug. 26, 2019. After avoiding capture for 16 days, Susan and Blane Barksdale were located at a residence in the Punkin Center, located near Tonto Basin, Ariz.

Last month, Susan Barksdale pleaded guilty to one count of manslaughter.

On Tuesday, Blane appeared in court to enter a plea agreement in connection to the case.

According to court officials, Blane's plea agreement said he will serve between 19 and 22 years in prison in reference to the second-degree murder charge. However, he will not be granted the possibility of parole.

Blane is expected to return to court for a status conference Jan. 10.

Tags

[Susan Barksdale](#) [Blane Barksdale](#) [Vehicle](#) [Police](#) [Criminal Law](#) [Crime](#) [Law](#) [Pima County](#) [Owner](#)
[Frank Bligh](#) [Agreement](#) [Plea](#)

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https://www.kvoa.com/news/tpd-location-of-frank-blighs-remains-learned-after-suspects-pleaded-guilty-in-his-death/article_5219b116-c807-11ec-944f-e31a5502a907.html

BREAKING

TPD: Location of Frank Bligh's remains learned after suspects pleaded guilty in his death

Anthony Victor Reyes

Apr 29, 2022



TUCSON (KVOA) - The remains of Frank Bligh have been recovered nearly three years after he was initially unaccounted for when his home burned down on Tucson's southeast side back in 2019.

On April 16, 2019, a missing person's report was issued for Bligh after he could not be located following a fire at his home located in the 3500 block of South Calexico near Escalante and Pantano roads.

Law enforcement then launched a homicide investigation on in May 2019 shortly after Pima County Sheriff's Department found Bligh's vehicle and suspected foul play.



Homicide being investigated in suspicious east side fire

By Anthony Victor Reyes

In a release shared Friday shortly after the sentencing of the suspects charged in connection to the house fire and his death, Tucson Police Department said they learned the location of the remains of Bligh shortly after Blane and Susan Barksdale pleaded guilty in connection to the case in December 2021.

After an extensive search of the San Carlos Apache Reservation Lands in Gila County, the remains of Bligh were found deep in the Sal River Canyon on Jan. 4.

The Barksdales are being charged with the murder of 72-year-old Frank Bligh who went missing back in April. His body still has not been found.

The Office of the Medical Examiner confirmed that the identity of the remains on Jan. 12.

On Friday, Blane was sentenced to 22 years in prison in reference to a second-degree murder charge in connection to the case. Susan, who pleaded guilty to manslaughter, received five years in prison, with nearly three years credited to her sentence.

The two were arrested in connection to the case in Henrietta, N.Y. in May 2019.

upLynk Clip

The two led law enforcement on a nationwide manhunt after they escaped custody in Utah while being extradited back to Arizona.



Tucson murder suspects escape while being extradited to Pima County

By Julia Leon

The two were recaptured by law enforcement outside a home in Gila County after a nearly month long search.

Have a news tip or would like to report a typo? Email Anthony Victor Reyes at areyes@kvoa.com.



Blane Barksdale gets 22 years for 2019 murder, wife sentenced to 5 years in prison

Tags

Frank Bligh | Criminal Law | Law | Crime | Law Enforcement | Susan Barksdale | Homicide | Blane | Remains
Investigation

Anthony Victor Reyes

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https://www.kvoa.com/news/local/blane-barksdale-gets-22-years-for-2019-murder-wife-sentenced-to-5-years-in-prison/article_03afc3e-c7e0-11ec-82ec-87120b3ad6.html

Blane Barksdale gets 22 years for 2019 murder, wife sentenced to 5 years in prison

News 4 Tucson

Apr 29, 2022



Blane and Susan Barksdale/ Courtesy: Tucson Police Department

TUCSON (KVOA) - The man who prompted a nationwide manhunt after escaping custody in 2019 in connection to the death of a Tucson man was sentenced to 22 years in prison Friday.

Eric Fink  @EricMillerFink · Apr 29, 2022



BREAKING: Blane Barksdale gets 22 years, the maximum sentence in the 2nd degree murder of Frank Bligh in April 2019. Barksdale and his

SITE PREVIEW: Blane Barksdale gets 22 years for 2019 murder, wife sentenced to 5 years in prison | Local | kvoa.com
The 21-year-old murderer of Frank Bligh in April 2019. Barksdale and his wife, Susan, went on the run...were captured in New York...then overpowered transport officers on the way back to Arizona. [@KVOA](#)

Eric Fink 

@EricMillerFink · [Follow](#)

In court today, Barksdale spoke to Bligh's family and said he was remorseful. Also said there was no excuse for his actions. Bligh's brother, Skip, called what Barksdale is convicted of doing 'inhuman.'

Susan Barksdale sentencing scheduled for 2 p.m. [@KVOA](#)

11:54 AM · Apr 29, 2022



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In April 2019, Tucson Fire Department responded to a house fire in the 3500 block of South Calexico Avenue. Fire officials said the fire caused a large section of the house's roof to collapse into the structure.

Initially, the owner of the home could not be located. However, on May 14, 2019, police revealed a vehicle was missing from the home. After further investigation, Pima County Sheriff's Department located the vehicle and suspected foul play. The owner of the vehicle was identified as 72-year-old Frank Bligh.

After their nephew Brent Mallard was arrested in connection to the fire, police named Susan and Blane Barksdale as suspects in the death of Bligh.

The two were arrested in New York on May 24, 2019. However, the couple escaped from transport van during extradition from New York to Pima County on Aug. 26, 2019. After avoiding capture for 16 days, Susan and Blane Barksdale were located at a residence in the Punkin Center, located near Tonto Basin, Ariz.

Susan Barksdale pleaded guilty to one count of manslaughter in November. Blane Barksdale pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in December.

Susan Barksdale was sentenced to five years in prison in connection to the case. Court officials said she will get nearly three years credited to her sentence.

Eric Fink 

@EricMillerFink · [Follow](#)



Susan Barksdale gets a 5-year sentence. She gets credit for time served, nearly 3 years. I'll have a live report at 5. [@KVOA](#)

Eric Fink  @EricMillerFink

HAPPENING NOW: Susan Barksdale's sentencing hearing. She's convicted of manslaughter in the death of Frank Bligh in 2019. She just addressed the court and said: 'I don't see a day in my future where I won't not be sorry.' Judge to make his decision in minutes. [@KVOA](#)

2:26 PM · Apr 29, 2022



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Couple who prompted nationwide manhunt sentenced in 2019 death of Tucsonan

Updated Apr 29, 2022



TPD: Location of Frank Bligh's remains learned after suspects pleaded guilty in his death

Tags

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