

TENNESSEE ARSON INVESTIGATION SECTION

K-6362

STATEMENT OF

William M. Donnelly, State Arson Investigator,  
Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office, 204 Barker,  
Street, Elizabethton, Tennessee, Phone: (H) 542-6365,  
(W) 594-6170, (P) 795-7661, on December 12, 1992.

I am a State Arson Investigator employed with the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office. I have been employed with the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office since June 10, 1983.

This statement relates to my participation regarding the investigation of a fire that occurred at the residence of Darlene Eldridge, 500 State Street, Cookville, Tennessee, on November 1, 1992 and the subsequent death of Darlene Eldridge.

On December 15, 1992, State Arson Supervisor Jesse Hodge instructed me to assist State Arson Investigator Cecil Byrge determine the cause and origin of the fire that occurred at the residence of Darlene Eldridge, 500 State Street, Cookville, Tennessee.

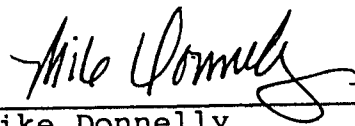
On December 16, 1992, I examined the scene of the fire. The fire scene is a two story wood frame dwelling house located at 500 State Street, Cookville, Tennessee.

Examination of the exterior of the structure disclosed there was charring and smoke deposits over the front door adjacent to the living room and over the living room windows. This evidence indicated the fire originated inside the structure in the living room area.

Examination of the interior of the structure disclosed the living room suffered the greatest amount of fire damage. Further examination of the interior of the structure disclosed distinct flammable/combustible liquid pour patterns in the wood flooring in the living room and the wood flooring on the second floor landing. The stairway from the living room to the second floor landing exhibited signs of extreme heat, however no distinct

flammable/combustible liquid pour patterns were present on the stairway. The fire traveled from the living room up the stairway and would have distorted any flammable/combustible liquid pour patterns that were present there.

Based on the evidence I observed at the fire scene and the subsequent information regarding the interview of witnesses furnished to me by Investigator Byrge, it is my opinion that a flammable/combustible liquid was poured in the living room and on the second floor landing and subsequently ignited causing the fire that damage the structure.



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Mike Donnelly  
State Arson Investigator