

Sheriff



Larry Ashley, Okaloosa County Sheriff

1250 Eglin Parkway • Shalimar, Florida 32579-1234
Phone: (850) 651-7410 • Email: sheriff@sheriff-okaloosa.org

May 10, 2014

**DEPUTIES RESCUE ABUSED AND BATTERED DOG,
ARREST TWO FWB RESIDENTS**



A Fort Walton Beach couple faces felony animal cruelty and other charges after deputies responded to a complaint of a man beating a dog with a piece of lumber and then holding it down by its neck with the lumber pushed against its throat.

Okaloosa County deputies went to the home of 32-year old Jessie Eugene Morris and 25-year old Amber Leard-Morris at 703 Green Street around 6:30 Friday night. They say Jessie Morris initially refused to open the gate and he said he'd given the black lab mix, named Sheba, to his father. Amber Morris also refused to open the gate and said the dog had run away three days earlier.

A piece of lumber with what appeared to be blood and black hair was found in the front yard. Eventually Jessie Morris agreed to show the deputy where the dog was hidden. The deputy found her in a small bedroom closet with numerous heavy items piled in front of the door. The dog yelped and whined when the door was opened and had obvious injuries to its face, neck, and foot. Panhandle Animal Welfare Society staffers responded and took possession of the dog, which was unable to walk and had to be carried to the van. It was taken for immediate veterinary care.

Jessie Morris said his wife put the black lab mix in the closet to hide it and he planned to get rid of it once the deputy left.

The OCSO charged Jessie and Amber Morris with felony animal cruelty, resisting a law enforcement officer without violence, providing a false official statement, and tampering with evidence.

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The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.

"The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and services and does not discriminate"

IN THE CIRCUIT/COUNTY COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

COPY

ARREST REPORT

OKALOOSA CO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

REPORT NO: OCSO14ARR004927

Jail Booking No	Offense No OCSO14OFF005188	Other No OCSO14CAD082230	OBTS 4601097482
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[SUSPECT]

Last First Middle Title Race Sex DOB Age Hgt Wgt
 LEARD-MORRIS AMBER PAULINE W F 4/10/1989 25 5'04" 235
 Eyes Hair MNI Number SSN ID No St Type OCA/Agency ID
 HAZ BRO OCSO11MNI002326 [REDACTED] FL 201275

Birth Location: City: MINOT County: State: NORTH DAKOTA Nation: UNITED STATES Citizenship: UNITED STATES

Address

703 GREEN ST Apt/Lot: B FORT WALTON BEACH FL 32547

Occupations (Current/Last Known is Listed First)

Business: DISABLED, Job Title: , Entered: 5/9/2014

Business: WAFFLE HOUSE, Job Title: SALES, Entered: 10/4/2011
 ISLAND FWB FL 32547

Business: UNEMPLOYED, Job Title: , Entered: 6/27/2011

Aliases (Last, First Middle Title DOB)

MORRIS, AMBER

Street Names

* none found in MNI *

[INCIDENT INFORMATION]

Occurred Date Range: 5/9/2014 18:00 to 5/9/2014 18:12 Lat / Long 30.44224 / -86.62952
 No. Di Street Apt/Lot City ST Zip (GEO)
 703 GREEN ST B FORT WALTON BEAC FL 32547 2 - 16 - PG40 - K-39

[CHARGES]

828.12.2

CONSERVATION-ANIMALS

CAUSE CRUEL DEATH PAIN AND SUFFERING

Counts	Level	Degree	GOC	UCR	NCIC	AON	Bond Amount
1	Felony	Third	Principal	9000		6201	

837.06.

FRAUD-FALSE STATEMENT

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Counts	Level	Degree	GOC	UCR	NCIC	AON	Bond Amount
1	Misdemeanor	Second	Principal	9000		2607	

843.02.

RESIST OFFICER

OBSTRUCT WO VIOLENCE

Counts	Level	Degree	GOC	UCR	NCIC	AON	Bond Amount
1	Misdemeanor	First	Principal	9000		4801	

918.13.

EVIDENCE-DESTROYING

TAMPER WITH OR FABRICATE PHYSICAL

Counts	Level	Degree	GOC	UCR	NCIC	AON	Bond Amount
1	Felony	Third	Principal	9000		4804	

COPY

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ARREST REPORT

OKALOOSA CO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

REPORT NO: OCSO14ARR004927

[STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE / NARRATIVE]

On May 09, 2014 I responded to 703 Green Street Lot B, Ft. Walton Beach, Florida in reference to a complaint of the residents of this residence abusing a dog by beating it with a piece of lumber. Upon arriving on scene I made contact with the defendant, Amber Morris, and the codefendant, her husband Jessie Morris.

While speaking with Jessie Morris about the incident he refused to open the privacy fence gate. Amber Morris exited the residence and also refused to open the gate despite my multiple lawful verbal commands to open the gate because of the concern Amber and Jessie were arming themselves or destroying evidence.

In an official sworn verbal statement from Amber she told me the black lab mix ran away three days ago and they now only own one dog.

After further investigation and interviews with witnesses I was able to determine the black lab mix was seen at Amber's residence that day. I told Amber about witnesses advising me they saw the black lab mix that afternoon and she continued to tell me they no longer owned a black lab mix because it ran away.

While speaking with witnesses, I made contact with the caller who told me they observed Jessie Morris strike the black lab mix multiple times with a piece of lumber. The witness observed the dog being held down and being hit with the piece of lumber and yelping and whining extremely loudly. The witness told me after Jessie struck the dog numerous times the dog stopped whining and yelping and Jessie continued striking it. The witness observed Jessie hold the dog down by its neck with the piece of lumber pushed into its throat. The witness then observed Jessie drag the dog away towards the back yard. The witness told me they observed Amber while Jessie was striking the dog and Amber made no effort to stop Jessie.

A piece of lumber was recovered in the front yard that had what appeared to be blood and black hair on it. I questioned Jessie about the piece of lumber and he told me the black lab mix laid on it before he chased it away. I showed the piece of lumber to a witness and she told me the piece is the same shape and size as the piece she observed the defendant striking the dog with. The piece of lumber will be submitted as evidence in this case.

After interviewing Amber, Jessie, and witnesses further, Jessie told me he would show me where the dog was despite Amber begging him not to. Amber led me to a small bedroom closet that had numerous heavy items piled in front of the door. The black lab mix was laying inside the closet on the floor and yelped and whined when the closet door opened up. The black lab mix had obvious injuries on its face, neck, and foot. The black lab mix was limping and yelped when its neck was touched. I observed the black lab mix had a torn toenail on one foot that was bleeding and had trouble lift its left rear leg. Panhandle Animal Welfare Society took possession of the black lab mix. The dog was unable to walk and had to be carried to the PAWS Officer's van.

Jessie told me he lied in his previous sworn statements because he was scared about going back to jail.

Jessie told me his wife Amber Morris put the black lab mix in the closet to conceal it so they would not get in trouble and because she did not want him to be arrested. Jessie told me he knew the dog was in there and was going to get rid of it when I left. Amber entered the house several times while I was on scene unsupervised during which she concealed the black lab mix. During a consensual search of the residence Amber objected to me searching the closet where the black lab mix was located and refused to leave the bedroom so I could do a thorough search.

There is probable cause to believe and your affiant does believe, Amber Morris, knowingly violated Florida State Statute 843.02; Resisting a Law Enforcement Officer without violence, Florida State Statute 837.06; Providing a false official statement, Florida State Statute §28.12.2; Animal cruelty with excessive pain and suffering, and Florida State Statute 918.13; Tampering with evidence. This incident did occur within Okaloosa County Florida, where your affiant is a sworn Law Enforcement Officer.

I hereby swear (or affirm) that the facts established on this affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

IN THE CIRCUIT/COUNTY COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

COPY

ARREST REPORT

OKALOOSA CO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

REPORT NO: OCSO14ARR004927

Signature (Arresting Officer) HAND, BRANDON Name 256 ID/SSN

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me this 10 day of May A.D., 2014 by who is personally known to me or has produced as identification.

Signature Notary Public LEO CO

Commission No: My Commission Expires

[PHYSICAL EVIDENCE] [NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE LISTED]

[ARREST INFORMATION]

Arrested 5/9/2014 18:12 Residency Within jurisdiction Injured None Extent of Injury N/A Resist No
Arrested Prior Yes Arrest Jurisdiction Within jurisdiction Alcohol Unknown Drugs Unknown
No. 703 Di Street GREEN ST A/L B City FORT WALTON BEAC FL ST Zip 32547 Lat / Long 30.44224 / -86.62952
Arresting Officer 256 HAND, BRANDON Unit OCSO/FSV/SOUTH/AC/A-SHIFT (GEO) 2 - 16 - PG40 - K-39 Officer Type
Reporting Officer 256 HAND, BRANDON Unit OCSO/FSV/SOUTH/AC/A-SHIFT Original Offense Jurisdiction OCSO
Forward to for approval OCSO/FSV/SOUTH/AC/A-SHIFT

Bond Set by LEO at Time of Arrest & Booking: \$0.00

- () None
() ROR
() Cash
() Pro

Bond Set by Judge () None () ROR/Sign
() Cash () PTR
() Any
() Pro
() PtIQ

()Purge
()SC

Return Court: CIRCUIT COURT: FELONY Date: 6/17/2014 Time: 15:30
Instructions: OKALOOSA COUNTY COURT HOSUE ANNEX EXTENSION

[DISPOSITION]

Disposition Type Release Type Other Desc

COPY

IN THE CIRCUIT/COUNTY COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

COPY

OKALOOSA CO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ARREST REPORT

REPORT NO: OCSO14ARR004927

Release Date Release Time Release Officer

Printed Printed By
No

Released To

Court DispositionType

Court Disposition Description

[ADDITIONAL PERSONS]

COURT DISPOSITION:

(right index)

- No Bill / Petition
- Issue Warrant
- Prosecution Approved

Signature of Assistant State Attorney

Date

COPY

COPY

ARREST REPORT

OKALOOSA CO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

REPORT NO: **OCSO14ARR004929**

<u>Counts</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>GOC</u>	<u>UCR</u>	<u>NCIC</u>	<u>AON</u>	<u>Bond Amount</u>
1	Felony	Third	Principal	9000		6201	

837.06.

FRAUD-FALSE STATEMENT

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

<u>Counts</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>GOC</u>	<u>UCR</u>	<u>NCIC</u>	<u>AON</u>	<u>Bond Amount</u>
1	Misdemeanor	Second	Principal	9000		2607	

843.02.

RESIST OFFICER

OBSTRUCT WO VIOLENCE

<u>Counts</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>GOC</u>	<u>UCR</u>	<u>NCIC</u>	<u>AON</u>	<u>Bond Amount</u>
1	Misdemeanor	First	Principal	9000		4801	

918.13.

EVIDENCE-DESTROYING

TAMPER WITH OR FABRICATE PHYSICAL

<u>Counts</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>GOC</u>	<u>UCR</u>	<u>NCIC</u>	<u>AON</u>	<u>Bond Amount</u>
1	Felony	Third	Principal	9000		4804	

[STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE / NARRATIVE]

On May 09, 2014 I responded to 703 Green Street Lot B, Ft. Walton Beach, Florida in reference to a complaint of the residents of this residence abusing a dog by beating it with a piece of lumber. Upon arriving on scene I made contact with the defendant, Jessie Morris, and the codefendant, his wife Amber Morris.

As I approached the residence Jessie was standing outside and was walking out of the privacy fence gate that surrounds the front of the property. I told Jessie I needed to talk to him about a call we received about a dog being abused. Jessie then stepped back into the gate, and shut and locked it from the inside. Because of the concern Jessie Morris was concealing or destroying evidence or arming himself I gave Jessie Morris multiple lawful verbal commands to open the gate and he told me that I was trespassing. Jessie refused to open the gate until additional deputies arrived on scene.

I told Jessie he was detained and he provided me with a post Miranda sworn verbal statement. Jessie told me he currently owns one dog because he gave his other dog, a black lab mix, to his father. Jessie then changed his story and told me he gave the dog to his brother 3 days ago.

After further investigation and interviews with witnesses, I was able to determine the black lab mix was seen at Jessie's residence that day. I told Jessie about witnesses advising me they saw the black lab mix that afternoon and he provided me yet another sworn verbal statement. Jessie told me he disciplined the dog by kicking it. Jessie told me he threw the dog out of the privacy fence gate and the last time he saw it running northbound on Green Street.

While speaking with witnesses I made contact with the caller who told me they observed Jessie hit the black lab mix multiple times with a piece of lumber. The witness observed the dog being held down and being hit with the piece of lumber and yelping and whining extremely loudly. The witness told me after Jessie struck the dog numerous times the dog stopped whining and yelping and Jessie continued striking it. The witness observed Jessie hold the dog down by its neck with the piece of lumber pushed into its throat, the witness believed Jessie was "trying to finish it off". The witness then observed Jessie drag the dog away towards the back yard.

A piece of lumber was recovered in the front yard that had what appeared to be blood and black hair on it. I questioned Jessie about the piece of lumber and he told me the black lab mix laid on it before he chased it away. I showed the piece of lumber to a witness and she told me the piece is the same shape and size as the piece she observed Jessie striking the dog with. The piece of lumber will be submitted as evidence in this case.

After interviewing Jessie, Amber, and witnesses further, Jessie told me he would show me where the dog was. Jessie led me to a small bedroom closet that had numerous heavy items piled in front of the door. The black lab mix was

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REPORT NO: OCSO14ARR004929

laying inside the closet on the floor and yelped and whined when the closet door opened up. The black lab mix had obvious injuries on its face, neck, and foot. The black lab mix was limping and yelped when it's neck was touched. I observed the black lab mix had a torn toenail on one foot that was bleeding and had trouble lifting its left rear leg. Panhandle Animal Welfare Society took possession of the black lab mix. The dog was unable to walk and had to be carried to the PAWS Officer's van.

Jessie told me he lied in his previous sworn statements because he was scared about going back to jail.

Jessie told me his wife Amber Morris put the black lab mix in the closet to conceal it so they would not get in trouble. Jessie told me he knew the dog was in there and was going to get rid of it when I left.

There is probable cause to believe and your affiant does believe, Jessie Morris, knowingly violated Florida State Statute 843.02; Resisting a Law Enforcement Officer without violence, Florida State Statute 837.06; Providing a false official statement, Florida State Statute 828.12.2; Animal cruelty with excessive pain and suffering, and Florida State Statute 918.13; Tampering with evidence. This incident did occur within Okaloosa County Florida, where your affiant is a sworn Law Enforcement Officer.

I hereby swear (or affirm) that the facts established on this affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature (Arresting Officer) _____ HAND, BRANDON Name 256 ID/SSN

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me this 10 day of May A.D., 2014 by _____ who is personally known to me or has produced _____ as identification.

Signature _____ Notary Public _____ LEO _____ CO

Commission No: _____ My Commission Expires _____

[PHYSICAL EVIDENCE] [NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE LISTED]

[ARREST INFORMATION]

Arrested 5/9/2014 18:12 Residency Within jurisdiction Injured None Extent of Injury N/A Resist No
Arrested Prior Yes Arrest Jurisdiction Within jurisdiction Alcohol Unknown Drugs Unknown
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Arresting Officer 256 HAND, BRANDON Unit OCSO/FSV/SOUTH/AC/A-SHIFT (GEO) 2 - 16 - PG40 - K-39 Officer Type
Reporting Officer 256 HAND, BRANDON Unit OCSO/FSV/SOUTH/AC/A-SHIFT Original Offense Jurisdiction OCSO
Forward to for approval OCSO/FSV/SOUTH/AC/A-SHIFT

Bond Set by LEO at Time of Arrest & Booking: \$0.00

- () None
() ROR
() Cash

COPY

IN THE CIRCUIT/COUNTY COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

COPY

ARREST REPORT

OKALOOSA CO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

REPORT NO: OCSO14ARR004929

() Pro

Bond Set by Judge _____ () None () ROR/Sign
 _____ () Cash () PTR
 _____ () Any
 _____ () Pro
 _____ () PtIQ
 () Purge _____
 () SC _____

Return Court: CIRCUIT COURT: FELONY Date: 6/17/2014 Time: 15:30
 Instructions: OKALOOSA COUNTY COURT HOUSE ANNEX EXTENSION

[DISPOSITION]

<u>Disposition Type</u>	<u>Release Type</u>	<u>Other Desc</u>
<u>Release Date</u> <u>Release Time</u> <u>Release Officer</u>		<u>Printed</u> <u>Printed By</u>
		<u>No</u>

Released To

<u>Court DispositionType</u>	<u>Court Disposition Description</u>
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[ADDITIONAL PERSONS]

COURT DISPOSITION: _____

(right index)

No Bill / Petition Issue Warrant Prosecution Approved

 Signature of Assistant State Attorney Date

COPY