Two arrested for torching car in fatal hit-and-run

by Cheryl McDermott

Two more men have been arrested in connection with Tuesdayâ€™s fatal hit-and-run collision, accused of arson and other crimes for helping burn an automobile that police believe struck and killed a 41-year old Bend woman was she rode her bicycle on Third Street near Powers Road.

Eric Allen Brown (left), and Robert Jennings Battles (right) - DCJ photos Robert Jennings Battles, 19, of Bend, was arrested Wednesday about 9:45 p.m., Bend Police Captain Jim Porter said. 20-year old Eric Allen Brown, also of Bend and the step-brother of the Southern California man police say drove the suspect vehicle, was arrested Thursday afternoon about 1 p.m.

â€œPhysical evidence, witness statements and recordings taken by video surveillance camera in a local business have provided evidence that implicated Battles and Brown in the arson,â€• Captain Porter said.

Police had earlier identified Battles and Brown as â€œpersons of interestâ€•, Porter said, and on Wednesday two search warrants were executed by Bend Police and Central Oregon Drug Enforcement (CODE) team members --one for Battlesâ€™s residence at 1014 NW Columbia Street and the other for his 2007 Nissan pickup.

Battles was taken into custody as he was leaving his residence just before the search, and lodged in the Deschutes County Jail, Porter said.

About 1 p.m. Thursday, detectives got a tip that Eric Brown was enroute from Klamath Falls to Bend. Oregon State Police dispatched patrol cars to south Highway 97 and took Brown into custody near La Pine. A search of the suspectâ€™s person, property, and vehicle yielded the seizure of about one ounce of cocaine, police reported.

Following an interview at the Bend Police Department, Brown was lodged in the Deschutes County Jail.

Battles was charged with second-degree arson, and according to a jail official posted bond and was released on Thursday morning.

As of Thursday night, Brown remained in jail with bail set at $67,500. He is charged with second-degree arson, second-degree conspiracy to commit arson, hindering prosecution, tampering with physical evidence, two counts of possession of cocaine, and unlawful manufacture and delivery of cocaine.

Christopher George Goodson 22, of El Cajon and his father, 51-year old George Harold Goodson of San Diego were both arrested Wednesday. Christopher Goodson is accused of driving the vehicle that killed Kimberly Ann Potter, and the elder Goodson is accused of hindering prosecution and theft â€“ charges that stem from allegedly reporting the vehicle stolen and conspiring to get an auto insurance settlement.

Captain Porter said police have located the last â€œperson of interestâ€• in a jurisdiction outside of Deschutes County where he is being held on an unrelated criminal charge.

â€œThis brings the number of persons arrested in relationship to this crime to four, with all being taken into custody within 60 hours of the crime being committed,â€• Porter said.

Bend Police asks that anyone with information regarding the ongoing investigation to call 541.3322.2960.

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