

POLICE BRIEFS

CONNECTICUT

MANCHESTER

Resident Charged In House Fire

Police Say Group Home Member Admitted Starting Blaze

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MANCHESTER — A resident of a group home on Birch Street admitted setting a fire in the large house because he did not want to stay there, police said.

Kurt Alkire, 56, was arrested Sunday and charged with first-degree arson, first-degree reckless endangerment and first-degree criminal mischief. He was being held Thursday on bail of \$150,000 and is to appear at Superior Court in Manchester on Dec. 12.

No one was hurt in the blaze Sunday at 85-87 Birch St., but seven residents and three staff members were displaced because of fire, smoke and water damage, fire Chief David Billings said. Alkire told police officers that he set his bed on fire "because I don't want to live there anymore; they put a thousand dead women's blood on my bed,"

according to an arrest report released Thursday.

When police arrived early in the morning, residents were outside and smoke was coming from a second-floor window. Alkire was sitting in a van. Officer Brian Kearney wrote in the report. Kearney said he checked records for any criminal history on Alkire, but found none.

Kearney wrote that he was, however, familiar with Alkire, who had spoken before about "dead women's blood," which Alkire said came from vampires. Moved to a cruiser, Alkire also "kept saying that the staff does lobotomies on his head every night, then rubs him down with herpes and gonorrhea," Kearney wrote.

The home is managed by Vinfen Connecticut of Windsor, identified on its website as a provider of community-based services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

and psychiatric conditions.

"We commend the quick actions of our staff and the fire department, who assured that this situation was contained and no injuries were sustained. We are cooperating with the police investigation into this issue," Jana McClure, vice president and executive director of Vinfen Connecticut, said in a statement.

Fire damage was contained to one bedroom, Billings said, but there was water, heat and smoke damage on the second floor and water damage on the first floor. Sprinklers helped douse the blaze, Billings said.

Chief building official Greg Smith said the house is uninhabitable until repairs are made. The four-family, 4,460-square-foot structure was built in 1900, according to assessor's records. Vinfen bought the house in 2012 for \$179,900, and the property is now appraised at \$249,000, records show.