

Tragic Murder-Suicide Unveiled in Ferguson Fire Investigation

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ST. LOUIS COUNTY - The St. Louis County Police Department has announced that a preliminary investigation of a fatal fire in the 500 block of North Clay Avenue in Ferguson, Mo., has revealed this to be a murder/suicide.

The deceased in the fire have been identified as Bernadine Pruessner, 39, an area college faculty member, and her children, Ivy Pruessner, 9, Ellie Pruessner, 9, Jackson Spader, 6, and Millie Spader, 2. All resided in the 500 block of North Clay residence in Ferguson. Bernadine was the mother of all four children.

"It is believed that Bernadine intentionally set a mattress on fire as that was the point of origin for the fire," St. Louis County Police said. "A note was also left stating Bernadine's intentions to take her life and the lives of her children."

Please contact the St. Louis County Police Department at 636-529-8210 to speak with investigators if you have any information regarding this incident. To remain anonymous or potentially receive a reward, please contact CrimeStoppers at 1-866-371-TIPS (8477).

If you or someone you know is struggling with depression or suicidal ideation, call or text 988. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 to offer free and confidential support whenever it is needed.