

## **Pair face charges in arson at truck sales lot** **by Tricia Schwennesen, *Register-Guard*, June 17, 2000**

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Eugene police arrested two men early Friday morning who they said are anarchists suspected of starting a fire at the Joe Romania truck dealership off of Franklin Boulevard, destroying a new pickup truck and damaging two others. The fire began on top of a rear tire of a 2000 Silverado half-ton pickup, said Terry Bazner, a Romania sales manager. A night security officer discovered the fire in the southeast corner of the three-block lot at about 1 a.m. Friday, he said. Flames melted the tire and wheel, destroyed the bed of the truck and blew out the rear window before spreading to two other new trucks - one on each side, Bazner said. Damages were estimated at about \$40,000.

Company officials aren't sure, but they suspect anarchists may have caused the fire in retaliation for the company renovating a piece of property at 7th Avenue and Washington Street, which may have been a popular hang-out spot, Bazner said. The dealer plans to take extra precautions through this weekend, he added.

Officers who responded to the fire saw a car leaving the area, and followed it to east Springfield where it was stopped, Lt. Risk Siel said. Jeffrey Michael Luers, 21, and Craig Andrew Marshall, 27, were taken to the Lane County Jail and booked at 8 a.m. on felony charges of first-degree criminal mischief and first-degree arson, Siel said. According to a custody referee, the two will be held through the weekend until their Monday arraignments. Luers was also arrested Wednesday night and charged with harassment after an incident in which police say Luers shoved an officer in the chest.

Luers disagrees. In a phone interview Thursday, Luers said he was videotaping interaction between two officers and a small group of activists from the sidewalk when an officer shoved him and knocked his camera out of his hands. Police confiscated Luers' videotape and said it will be used as evidence. Friday's arrests increased tension between police and activists, who are gearing up for a "historical re-enactment" of last year's June 18 anti-capitalist march-turned-riot.

Police spokeswoman Jan Power said police believe the four-day "punk fest" leading up to Sunday's event has attracted between 50 and 150 activists from out of town who are camping at various places throughout the city. In addition to the arrests, police stopped between 20 and 30 pedestrians and motorists in the Whiteaker neighborhood late Thursday night and early Friday morning. Power said the heavy police presence in the neighborhood is a direct result of more people being out and about in that area. Police also responded to two dumpster fires in the Whiteaker neighborhood shortly after 3 a.m. on Friday. Damages were estimated at about \$300.

There were no other reported incidents. On Friday afternoon, a group of about 30 activists walked from downtown Eugene to the University of Oregon campus where they stopped and ate lunch. The group then moved on to the Lane County Jail, where they sat peaceably for a few minutes before heading back to Scobert Garden near Fourth Avenue and Blair. No band lineup or "punk fest" location had been announced, but by Friday

evening - the third day of the event - people began to gather at the Washington-Jefferson park to hear live music. Carrie Dougherty, an anarchist and an organizer of Sunday's event, said the arrests and the heavy police presence were "just a continuation of their intimidation tactics." "They're trying to keep people off the streets for Sunday and they're trying to scare people into going home," Dougherty said. "No matter what we're doing, we're targets."