

Ava Turner

“Downtown fire at CofC students’ home being investigated as a hate crime”

Two students are currently in critical condition from a fire that struck their Radcliffe Street home around 2 a.m. Friday.

The fire marshal’s office said it is investigating the fire as arson since evidence points toward an intentionally set fire. Because the victims are African American, they are also investigating it as a hate crime under federal law.

The three CofC students -Jordan Handson, Dana Jupiter and Jayden Wilkins - survived the fire but two are still in critical condition at local MUSC hospital.

Wilkins woke in her sleep with smoke filling the room but managed to escape off her bedroom balcony on the second floor with no injuries.

Hanson and Jupiter could only escape by running through the fire, leaving them with third-degree burns.

A neighbor had called 911, and firefighters arrived within minutes to rescue the students from the burning home.

It took nearly an hour to put out the blaze that burned the home to the ground. Property tax records show it was valued at \$750,000.

“These students are extremely lucky to be alive. It was quiet and fast, so it is remarkable they even woke up in time to escape. There was an angel looking out for them, said Fire Marshal Mike Zuladeh.”

A hate crime toward the students because they are all African American. South Carolina does not have a state hate crimes law, but a federal statute can be enforced.

“I’ve lived here for 23 years and never seen such mean-spiritedness done to someone here. John Folson, a neighbor from down the street says, we have people of all races and all faiths and all sexual orientations, and we don’t need this kind of hate coming in our neighborhood. People need to stop hurting other people, no matter who they are.”

The South Carolina FBI office is investigating this case thoroughly and will move forward with a felony charge if in fact it was a hate crime statute.