

Inglis Commissioner Hit with Felony Commercial Littering Charge



By Terry Witt
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Inglis Town Commissioner Andy White has been arrested on a felony charge of burying batteries, car parts, furniture, waste tires and even televisions at his junkyard in Inglis.

White, 47, is facing charges of commercial littering, a third degree felony, and littering on private property, a misdemeanor.

Assistant State Attorney Michael Becker said if White is convicted he is unlikely to get the maximum of five years in prison on the felony charge.

“We’re mainly interested in getting the property cleaned up,”

Becker said.

White owns A&D Salvage and Recycling, a junkyard at 25 Hudson Street in Inglis. He also owns White’s Quality Auto.

When state investigators served a search warrant on the junkyard property in July of 2013 they found buried on the property more than 200 waste tires, furniture, plastics, a metal tank for oil or fuel, other metal tanks, black sewage pipe, a toilet, fabric, building materials, hoses, wiring and 24 metal propane tanks containing propane, vehicle parts, vehicle frames, motors and transmissions and vehicle fuel tanks.

Two officers from the former Inglis Police Department were tipped off to White’s activities while they were investigating possible violations of the Department of Motor Vehicle rules by White. During the course of the investigation one of the officers was told about possible environmental law violations. The officer was approached by former employees of White who said they had witnessed the burial of car parts, batteries and tires in the ground of A&D Salvage and Recycling.

After obtaining search warrants, FWC investigators used the testimony of former employees to identify areas of the junkyard where materials had been buried. An arrest report said their information proved to be accurate. White was arrested by the Levy County Sheriff’s Office on Feb. 4. The arrest warrant was issued by the State Attorney’s office in Gainesville.

Becker said the reason White wasn’t arrested for seven months is that materials taken from White’s Junkyard had to be tested and the results sent to the State Attorney. The results arrived in September or October. Becker said he has been extremely busy since that time.

According to the arrest report, one of the principal witnesses for investigators was Julio Callazo, a former employee of White who still occasionally works for him. Callazo started working for White in 2007 and worked for him until November of 2012. Callazo told Inglis police that there were vehicles and propane tanks buried at the junkyard. He testified that in 2008 or 2009 he dug a hole 15 feet deep and 30 to 40 feet long with White’s backhoe. Propane tanks, cable wires, auto debris and engine blocks with motor oil still in the engine were dumped in the hole at White’s direction.

Using an aerial photograph, Callazo identified areas where materials had been buried. In one area near Hudson Street he indicated tires, rims and car parts were buried. In an area near the corner of the property at Hudson Street and County Road 40 he said car parts, frames, motors and transmissions were buried. In the middle of the property near a shed, he said propane tanks were buried in a hole 10 feet wide by 25 feet deep. He outlined an area on the southwest corner of the

property off Hudson Street where automobiles were disassembled and fluids were discharged on the ground. Callazo signed and dated the aerial photograph.

The Inglis investigators also interviewed William "Trey" Wilson who used to get parts for automobiles he works on. In 2008, Wilson said he saw a large hole at the junkyard that was big enough to hold vehicles. In the hole he saw trash and crushed propane tanks. Wilson testified that automobile fluids were routinely poured on the ground. He said automobile engines and transmissions were placed on the ground and the oil was allowed to drain into the soil. Wilson used an aerial photograph to identify an area he described as a "motor pile" and circled another area he labeled as being used for draining of transmissions. Near the south fence he identified an area as a "battery pile." Near the northeast corner he identified a shed which was for "buried stuff."

Wendy and Gary Yates were interviewed by the Dunnellon Police Department as part of the investigation. Wendy Yates told investigators materials buried at the junkyard included propane tanks, water filter tanks and old television sets. She said her husband dug a hole for the materials and the hole was covered in 2008. She marked an aerial photo to identify where she saw propane tanks and televisions buried.

Gary Yates worked for White for two years and operated A&D Auto Salvage and also White's Quality Auto. His duties included stripping cars, pulling motors from vehicles and hauling cars. He worked for rent and to pay back White for a car. During his time at the junkyard, he said propane tanks, water waste containers, old television sets and other odds and ends were buried at the business. He described one incident in which he was ordered by White to dig out an old stump at the junkyard. After the stump was removed White told him to expand the hole. White then ordered him to dump the propane tanks, water waste containers, old television sets and other items in the hole. He said he followed orders because White had given him a car.

Yates said gas and oil were routinely poured on the ground at White's businesses. He said no containers were ever used to collect automobile fluids. Yates said he personally tried to contain fluids when he was working.

State investigators analyzed soil samples from White's businesses and found the samples to be contaminated with fuel.