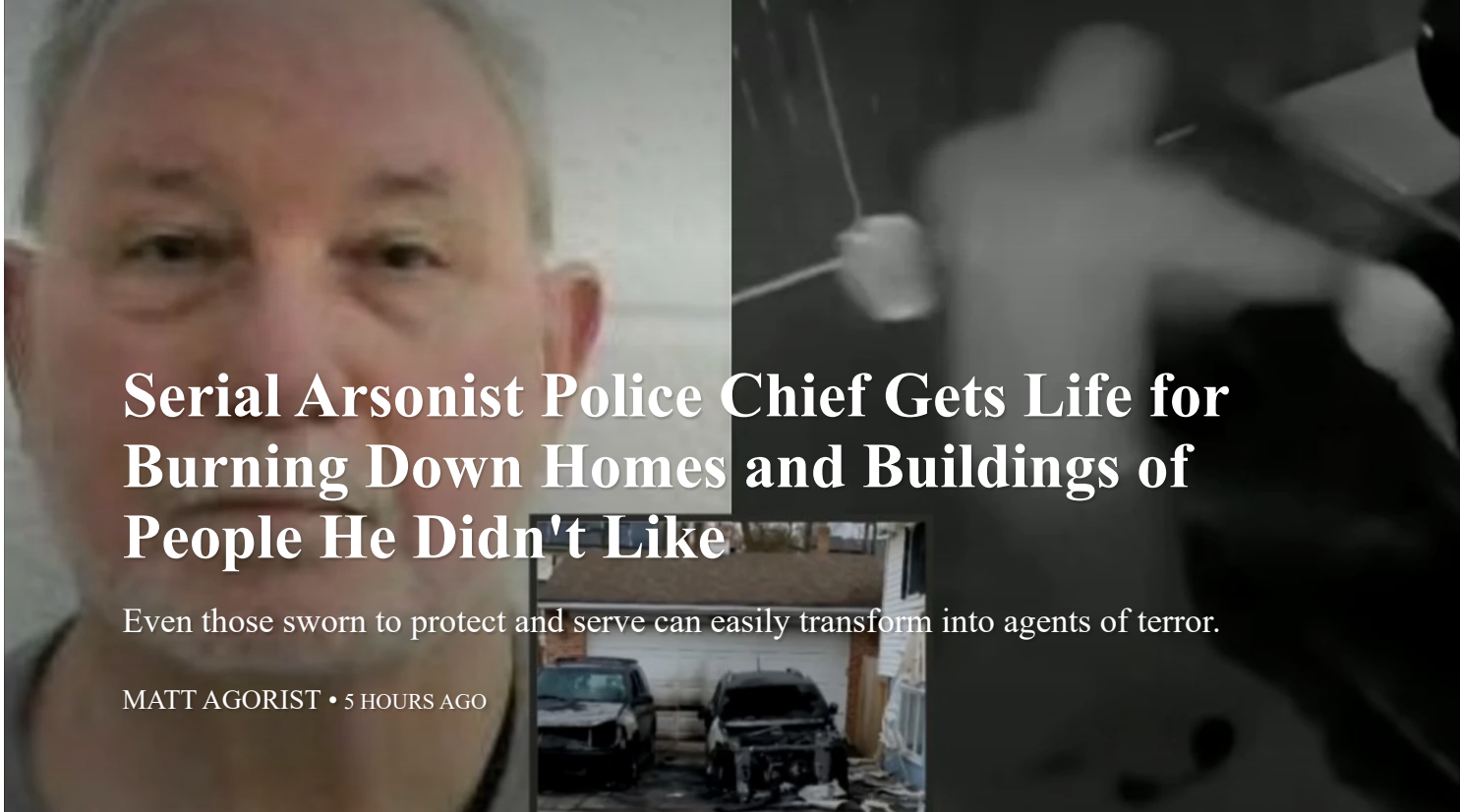




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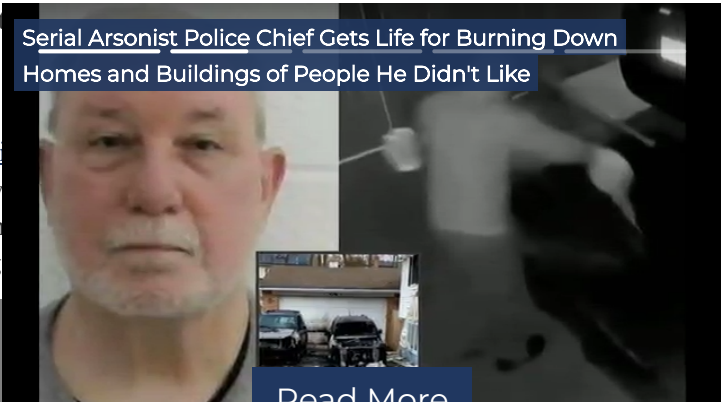
# Serial Arsonist Police Chief Gets Life for Burning Down Homes and Buildings of People He Didn't Like

Even those sworn to protect and serve can easily transform into agents of terror.

MATT AGORIST • 5 HOURS AGO

A crooked police chief turned arsonist, David Crawford, 71, has been sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison after being convicted of multiple felony charges for a string of fires he set targeting homes and property of those he saw as adversaries. When Crawford was arrested in March 2021, this former law enforcement official wielded his position as a shield, allowing him to evade justice for a decade.

Crawford was issued eight life sentences plus an [additional](#) sentence for the series of fires set across various parts of the state. The fires, which resulted from his destructive acts, countless victims, in addition to property damage, resulted in people escaping their homes amidst flames and smoke, losing



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State’s Attorney Richard Gibson lauded the sentencing as a fitting end for Crawford's reign of terror. Despite the severity of the sentence, one must wonder how a law enforcement officer could get away with such blatant criminal activity for so long. Was it the perceived integrity of his badge that delayed suspicion? Or was it an insidious veil of protection offered to one of their own by the law enforcement community? Or both?

In March, a Howard County jury found Crawford guilty on several counts, including attempted first-degree murder, first-degree arson, and first-degree malicious burning. The fires for these charges were set between 2017 and 2018. However, Crawford is still awaiting trial for other counts in Prince George's County and Montgomery County.

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finally led investigators to connect the dots, after discovering that Crawford had previous disagreements with many of the victims.

Before his downfall, Crawford served as the chief of the Laurel Police Department from 2006 to 2010 and worked for other county police departments. During his trial, surveillance videos of Crawford setting fires were revealed, showing a consistent pattern of using gasoline to start the blazes.

The first fire, which was set in Prince George's County in 2011, showed Crawford accidentally setting himself on fire while torching an unoccupied vehicle—a poetic precursor to his self-immolation through his criminal acts.

The sentencing of Crawford, while representing justice served for his victims, raises questions about the nature of police accountability. His case highlights a profound betrayal of the public's trust, showing that even those sworn to protect and serve can transform into agents of terror. As Gibson pointedly noted, "This sentence should send a message that prosecutors are capable of holding law enforcement accountable if they violate our laws." One can only hope this proves true, moving forward.

As the dust settles on this case, Crawford's attorney has stated plans to appeal the verdict and sentence. For now, at least, the former police chief's reign of terror has come to an end, and the spotlight turns onto the system that allowed him to commit these crimes unchecked for so long.

