

# Former St. Paul cop charged with arson in August fire at his pizza restaurant

<https://bringmethenews.com/minnesota-news/former-st-paul-cop-charged-with-arson-in-august-fire-at-his-pizza-restaurant>

A fire at a nearby grocery store, which broke out on the same day, is still under investigation.

- [Adam Uren](#)
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A former [St. Paul](#) police officer has been charged with starting the fire at his pizza business, Checkerboard Pizza, last August.

Tou Mo Cha, 55, of Little Canada, has been charged with 2nd-degree arson in connection with the Aug. 9 fire at 992 Arcade Street.

The fire broke out on the same day as a fire across the street at 52 Market & Trading grocery store, which has also been deemed arson and is still under investigation.

According to a criminal complaint, Cha was seen on surveillance exiting Checkerboard pizza and then repeatedly entering an adjoining apartment complex.



St. Paul Fire Department

Per the complaint: "The video shows the defendant's wife coming out of Checkerboard Pizza and going to their vehicle. Then, the defendant goes between the pizza shop and the doorway of the apartment and the fire starts a few minutes after he drives away."

An investigation into the blaze confirmed that the fire started in the apartment portion of the building, with gasoline likely used as an accelerant.

The complaint claims Cha denied going into the apartment entryway where the fire started, but this was contradicted by the video.

[The Pioneer Press reports](#) that Cha was a police officer with St. Paul Police Department until 2005, when he resigned from the force in a year in which he had been charged with making terroristic threats, and a year after being charged with lending his service gun that was later used in a pair of drive-by shootings.

Cha has not been charged in connection with the fire at 52 Market and Trading, which remains under investigation.