

Woman Accused of Defacing National Cathedral Can Leave Jail

A woman accused of splashing green paint on parts of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., can be released to a halfway house to await trial on a property destruction charge, a judge ruled on Friday.

Jia M. Tian, 58, is accused of dumping the paint on a pipe organ and on woodwork in two chapels at the cathedral. She carried a Chinese passport with an expired visa and has been jailed since her arrest on Monday.

Superior Court Judge Fredrick Sullivan ruled that she could be moved to a halfway house if she wears an ankle monitor, but she will not be allowed to see visitors or to leave the facility before her next court hearing on August 29.

Metropolitan Police Officer Christopher Carkeet testified that it could cost \$15,000 to \$18,000 to repair the cathedral.

Investigators said a witness had seen Tian sitting in the church after services ended and just before the vandalism occurred.

The property destruction charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Police were still investigating whether Tian was involved in similar acts of vandalism at other Washington landmarks last week. Paint was splashed onto the Lincoln Memorial and used to put symbols on a statue outside the Smithsonian Institution.

A detective testified that a footprint found at the Lincoln Memorial after the splashing had a tread pattern matching that on Tian's shoes.

