

Cleaning service's jewelry thief had a criminal record

To have valuables taken from your home as the result of a burglary while you're away is bad enough. To have expensive jewelry stolen from you by someone you gave your house key to is much worse.

The recent larcenies in Cheyenne should remind homeowners of how cautious they need to be about whom they allow into their homes in their absence. It also should convince legislators that more liability has to be imposed on a business that sends employees into private homes (or businesses, for that matter). Also, enhanced penalties should be applied to pawn shops that accept merchandise that a prudent person would know is stolen.

Here are more details about what happened in Cheyenne recently to at least three property owners who owned pieces of expensive jewelry:

According to the Affidavit of Probable Cause, an employee of a local cleaning service allegedly stole expensive jewelry pieces from three different households.

The alleged thief didn't come through a door or window broken for entry. He walked through the front door, posing as an honest employee of a cleaning service but apparently intent on stealing as much jewelry as he could. And he did.

The first report of a larceny came on July 24, 2008. That owner reported six pieces missing, four rings and two bracelets. Contrary to local media reports, that woman told police her house had not been burglarized. For some reason, reports other than in the Cheyenne Herald said that the jewelry thefts had been done through burglaries. That served to

deceive other residents who were missing jewelry but were not advised that this one cleaning service was the link to the thefts. Had they known the truth, they could have inventoried their valuables and determined whether they, too, had been robbed. Instead, they thought the losses were from break-ins and they could tell their house had not been broken into.

The first person to report the thefts valued her jewelry at \$19,790.00. Again, local media, as recently as yesterday, were still reporting, for some unfathomable reason, that the total of missing jewelry was less than \$6,000.00. It was much more than that and all of the stolen jewelry probably still hasn't been recovered.

The detective assigned this case upon the first report of jewelry being stolen, presumably as the result of a larceny, not a burglary, is being highly praised.

He located two pieces of this resident's missing jewelry at a local pawn shop. The value of the rings the alleged thief pawned was \$6,790.00. The Affidavit does not show what the pawn shop paid to buy the stolen goods.

On August 14, 2008, another homeowner contacted the CPD detective. This woman was missing a diamond necklace valued at \$11,975.00. She used the same house cleaning company and the same employee had cleaned her house "on several occasions."

The alleged thief only worked for this cleaning service for about six weeks. Cleaning services are often scheduled on a weekly basis so he had several cracks at finding and stealing jewelry.

The CPD detective contacted another Cheyenne pawnshop and determined that the thief's girlfriend had tried to pawn that particular necklace on August 1. Lincolnway Pawn would not buy the obviously stolen piece of expensive diamond jewelry. Initially, the alleged thief denied having stolen that piece but later admitted to the detective that he had given it to his girlfriend, and according to another District Court case file, mother of at least one of his children, to pawn.

When that pawn was unsuccessful, the thief (I'm going to drop "alleged," he has admitted to his thefts) sold the \$11,975.00 piece of diamond jewelry to a friend he knew only by a nickname - for **\$100.00!** That's right. A nearly \$12,000.00 diamond necklace brought the thief only \$100.00. And probably 7-10 in Rawlins.

His "friend's" girlfriend pawned that necklace in Colorado Springs for \$100.00.

This has been a remarkably good, thorough and continuing investigation by Detective Thomas Hood of the Cheyenne Police Department.

On August 25, 2008, the CPD detective was contacted by a well-known local female professional. She had been told by a current employee of this cleaning service that a former employee "had stolen several pieces of jewelry from different houses" and it was suggested she check to see if she were missing anything. When she checked, she was missing three rings. The appraised value of her three rings was \$10,250.00. She wasn't sure when her rings had been stolen but a search warrant of the thief's residence recovered a pawn ticket at a local pawn shop for one of her rings, dated August 9th, so it was before that date.

The appraised value of that recovered ring was \$5,950.00.

That might have been where other media came up with the understated value of the total value of jewelry stolen.

The total value of the jewelry stolen from these three homes is \$42,015.00.

On September 9, 2008, the first victim reclaimed a diamond and gold ring which was recovered from the same pawn shop as had bought her first two stolen rings. This piece was valued at \$800.00.

Was the cleaning service responsible in this matter? Should they have known that the man they hired was a high risk to place inside private homes, especially those of wealthy customers? Or, were they blameless? Is it impossible for cleaning services like this one to discover whether a new hire like this one is honest and trustworthy? Was that outside their reach?

It took me about 15 minutes to ascertain the criminal past of this guy and other negative facts of his personal life that should have led the employer to never allow the guy unfettered access to homes to provide cleaning services.



Help yourself to the jewelry when you've finished vacuuming the hall.

For starters, the guy was released from Rawlins last year - August of 2007. He has spent considerable time as a guest of the Laramie County Detention Center.

He has at least four children by three different women, and there is no evidence he has paid child support for any of his children. In fact, a divorced wife filed a motion for termination of his parental rights and right to visitation. He agreed. He also has no further obligation to provide medical or health insurance for the two preschool children. Ever. At times in his life, he has made good money as a truck driver. He was in Rawlins on a burglary conviction. He violated probation, used drugs while on probation, etc., etc.

The cleaning service owner is responsible for these thefts. He must be held accountable. Pawn shop owners who knowingly and repeatedly buy expensive jewelry or other items a reasonable person would believe are stolen must also be held accountable. And, residents, **BEWARE!**

Herald
pick-up locations

- City News - Downtown
- BLM Building Lobby
- Safeway - South Cheyenne
- Wonder Bread Outlet - Ridge Rd.
- Oroweat Bakery Outlet - SW Dr.
- Borderline - Colorado Lottery
- Laramie County Library
- Laramie County Gov't Center - North
- Herschler Building - North
- VA Hospital - South Entrance
- Town & County Liquors
- Burger Inn
- Luxury Diner
- American Storage
- Avenues Pet Clinic
- Los Amigos
- Diamond Horseshoe
- Daylight Donuts (both)
- Quick Draw Optical
- Village Inn-Downtown
- T-Joe's Steakhouse & Saloon

Many, many other locations in the City and in Laramie County

SEPT 30

Seven hundred four (704) days since Jim McBride threatened to take legal action against the Cheyenne Herald for disclosing his Bennett, Colorado, Superintendent Evaluations.

The Evaluations can be read at: www.cheyenneherald.com
"Articles" page, October 30, 2006

WyomingNETWORK.com

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