

Shoeprints help connect numerous crime scenes to suspect

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CASE NUMBER: 2023-CR-000301

LEAVENWORTH, KAN. – A distinctive walk and pair of shoes left at a burglary scene in Leavenworth helped investigators connect a De Soto man to numerous burglaries and thefts.

Lane M. Simpson, born on January 17, 1996, pleaded no contest Wednesday on three counts of non-residential burglary and one count of theft. The court accepted Simpson's pleas and found him guilty.

Charges were filed on May 9, 2023, after detectives used surveillance video, shoes, shoeprints, and surveillance video to connect Simpson to the crimes.

Investigators linked Simpson to multiple crimes between April 10 and April 27, 2023. Detectives caught a break in the investigation when a pair of running shoes were found abandoned at Waters Feed Company, the scene of one of the non-residential burglaries. On April 19, two detectives examined those shoes, cleared a shoe of mud, and determined that the tread pattern matched that of shoe prints left on the business doors of several other burglaries.

On April 26, while serving a search warrant on a parked vehicle that had been spotted at the scene of another burglary, a detective located crucial evidence identifying Simpson as a person of interest. While serving that search warrant, the detective found a knife with the name "Lane" carved into the handle, a paystub, and a receipt from Langley Recycling. That detective secured surveillance video from Langley Recycling; in that video, Lane can be seen wearing the running shoes he had abandoned at Water's Feed Company.

The theft charge Simpson pleaded to stemmed from an incident on April 10, 2023. Simpson stole miscellaneous tools from Westar Energy, located near 2nd Avenue and Limit Street.

On April 15, 2023, the Kansas Country Store at 728 Cherokee Street was burglarized by Simpson, who stole a pair of cowboy boots and some cash. This was the first of three burglary charges involved in Wednesday's plea.

On April 16, 2023, Simpson entered Waters Feed Company, 909 Miami, without permission and took two ratchet sets and a GoPro totaling more than \$1,375 in damages and property stolen.

On April 18, 2023, Simpson entered the Jiffy Lube, 3120 S. 4th Street, and took cash from a register, a jumpstart pack, and a Samsung tablet totaling \$500 stolen property.

Leavenworth County Attorney Todd Thompson said, "We're lucky to have the law enforcement we have. We're grateful to all the businesses for their help and cooperation in this investigation."

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for August 9, 2023.