



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Waconia T-Mobile Store Burglar Convicted by Carver County Jury**

Carver County Attorney Mark Metz announced that on May 13, 2019, a Carver County jury convicted Ramon Blakey, age 31, of St. Paul, of Felony Theft and Second Degree Burglary for burglarizing the T-Mobile Store at 210 First Street, Waconia, during the early morning hours of Sunday, October 21, 2018.

Following the guilty verdicts, Carver County District Court Judge Michael Wentzell took Blakey into custody and ordered that the Minnesota Department of Corrections prepare a pre-sentence investigation. A sentencing date is for July 12, 2019, and based on Blakey's extensive criminal history, the Carver County Attorney's Office will seek an executed prison sentence.

The burglary of the Waconia T-Mobile involved both extensive planning and sophisticated execution. Surveillance video from a nearby business, the Waconia Brewing Company, revealed Blakey conducting reconnaissance two days before the burglary. At the time of the burglary, Blakey, along with an associate, took measures to assure that all adjacent businesses were closed. Blakey and his associate then had exclusive control of the common areas in this building housing several businesses, for the duration of the burglary.

The two men surreptitiously bored through a common wall shared with a former pizzeria into the T-Mobile network room where the security system was immediately disabled. Then, moving into the storage room, and tearing out the security camera in that area, the two men used a power saw to cut into the large safe containing more than \$25,000.00 worth of cell

phones. The men then proceeded to cut into a drop safe containing several thousand dollars in cash. The men were not successful in fully breaching the drop safe but instead removed both the drop safe along with the stolen phones into the getaway car. Because T-Mobile phones are GSM phones, they have significant value on the black market as SIM cards provided by third party vendors not related to T-Mobile can activate GSM phones.

The burglars would have likely escaped had T-Mobile not installed a clandestine GPS tracker inside the box of one of the stolen phones. Once that tracker phone left the premises, it activated an alarm at 1:58 a.m., notifying law enforcement. Because the tracker phone sent out continuous GPS coordinates, the Carver County Sheriff's Office, the Chaska Police Department, and the Eden Prairie Police Department gave chase to the suspect vehicle, a 2005 Ford Freestar.

The pursuit began just outside of Waconia and proceeded towards downtown Minneapolis, reaching speeds in excess of 110 mph. Because of bar closing time and associated public safety concerns, the pursuit was terminated near Penn and Highway 394 in Minneapolis. However, the tracker phone continued broadcasting GPS coordinates and the Minnesota State Patrol located the Ford approximately eight minutes later abandoned near 18th Avenue South in Minneapolis -- the burglars had abandoned the Ford containing the stolen drop safe and phones.

Although the T-Mobile crime scene was carefully processed, law enforcement could not confirm that Blakey or his associate left any DNA or fingerprints at the scene. However, in part, the prosecution showed the jury a Maplewood Home Depot surveillance video showing Blakey and his associate buying tools approximately seven hours before the burglary. This specific purchase included a Ryobi reciprocating saw--both the saw and the receipt were found in the Ford. Paint found on the red saw blade was consistent with the red substance found in cuttings to both safes. In addition, the prosecution presented a second Waconia Brewing surveillance video that, while low quality, revealed Blakey wearing a distinctive tracksuit jacket -- this distinctive jacket was covering the safe in the Ford after Blakey and his associate abandoned it after the pursuit. To

bolster its case, the prosecution also showed the jury another video from a Walgreens store showing Blakey wearing the full, distinctive track suit.

Chief Deputy Carver County Attorney Peter Ivy prosecuted the case. Ivy noted that Blakey's identity and participation in this crime was proven beyond a reasonable doubt based on circumstantial evidence. Ivy stated that these verdicts were a testament to the competence, professionalism, and diligence of the Carver County Sheriff's Detectives assigned to the case.

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