



TANEY COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: JANUARY 21, 2009

SUSPECTED LEADER OF SHOPLIFTING RING FOUND GUILTY

FORSYTH, MO – Taney County Prosecuting Attorney, Jeffrey M. Merrell announced today that VICKY KIRKLAND, dob: 9/10/1958 of Lowell, Arkansas was found guilty of the felony of receiving stolen property after a bench trial in the Circuit Court of Taney County Missouri on January 21, 2010.

On October 11, 2008 VICKY KIRKLAND drove her Ford Explorer to Branson, Missouri and was accompanied by two associates who shoplifted from stores at the Tanger Mall. VICKY KIRKLAND'S associates put the shoplifted goods into her Ford Explorer into duffel bags brought to Branson by the women to hold stolen merchandise. Four other women, including VICKY KIRKLAND'S daughter, SHELLY CLARK, plead guilty to felony stealing. There was no evidence VICKY KIRKLAND stole merchandise, but she told officers she was aware the other women were stealing.

SHELLY CLARK, dob: 4/20/1985 was also scheduled on January 21, 2010 for a bench trial on her felony stealing charge. However, SHELLY CLARK entered a guilty plea without a plea agreement before her trial began. SHELLY CLARK had written a confession on the date she was caught by the Branson Police.

In response to the conviction and plea of guilty, Taney County Prosecuting Attorney, Jeffrey M. Merrell stated, “[f]ortunately, the professional and swift response of the Branson Police Department stopped and apprehended these women before they returned to Arkansas with the stolen merchandise. Nearly all of the items were recovered and returned to area merchants on the same date this shoplifting ring was broken up by the Branson Police Department.”

Formal sentencing is set for March 19, 2010 at 10:30. VICKY KIRKLAND faces a range of punishment of one (1) day to one (1) year in the Taney County Jail, or one (1) year to seven (7) years in the Missouri Department of Corrections and/or a fine not to exceed \$5,000 for the class C felony of receiving stolen property. SHELLY CLARK faces a range of punishment of one (1) day to one (1) year in the Taney County Jail, or one (1) year to seven (7) years in the Missouri Department of Corrections and/or a fine not to exceed \$5,000 for the class C felony of stealing.

For more information please visit www.taneycountyprosecutor.com.

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