



TANEY COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

JEFFREY M. MERRELL, PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

P.O. Box 849

FORSYTH, MO 65653

www.taneycountyprosecutor.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: JEFF MERRELL
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
(417) 546-7260**

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PERSISTENT OFFENDER SENTENCED TO TWELVE (12) YEARS FOR BURGLARY

Taney County Prosecuting Attorney, Jeffrey M. Merrell, announced today that TERESA K. BUCKNER, DOB: 10/31/1976, of Springfield, Missouri, was sentenced on Thursday, July 21, 2011, to twelve (12) years in prison by Judge Mark Orr in the Taney County Circuit Court. On May 19, 2011, Buckner entered guilty pleas to the class B felony of Burglary in the first degree, the class C felony of Tampering in the first degree, and the class C felony of Possession of a Controlled Substance. Buckner was charged as a prior and persistent felony offender, and had been on supervised probation at the time she committed these three (3) felonies.

Buckner's charges stemmed from a September 2010 burglary of a Pointe Royale home whose owners were out-of-town for several days. The investigation pointed to Andrew Larned as the initial burglar of the home, but the home was eventually burglarized by Buckner and multiple other thieves. On July 14, 2011, Larned was sentenced to ten (10) years in prison for his role in the burglary and stealing.

Eventually, the case broke on September 30, 2010, when Taney County Deputy Carl Pride noticed a silver 2000 Mercedes Benz at Old Patty Town in Kissee Mills, Missouri, which was suspected to be reported as stolen from the Pointe Royale home. Pride was on another call, so he notified the Sheriff's Office in order to have Detective Roger Ellis respond to the location of the Mercedes. When Detective Ellis arrived, he found Teresa Buckner in the Mercedes and Daniel Lee Pherigo transferring property from the Mercedes into a red BMW automobile. Further investigation revealed that the Mercedes had, in fact, been reported stolen days before. In addition, the items being transferred by Pherigo into the BMW included items stolen from the home of the same victims who reported the Mercedes as stolen. This evidence led the Taney County Sheriff's Office investigation to stolen coins pawned by Larned in Nixa, Missouri. Earlier this month, Pherigo received a thirty-five (35) year sentence after being found guilty by a Taney County jury.

Buckner had pleaded guilty pursuant to a plea agreement with the Taney County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, which capped Buckner's sentence at twelve (12) years. "A plea agreement like this one is not uncommon when a defendant is willing to admit guilt not have a trial," said Taney County Prosecutor Jeffrey Merrell.

MAIN OFFICE: (417) 546-7260 | FAX: (417) 546-2376

BAD CHECKS: (417) 546-7261 | VICTIM/WITNESS: (417) 546-7263 | CHILD SUPPORT: (417) 546-7262

Buckner was sentenced to twelve (12) years in prison for the class B felony of Burglary in the first degree, seven (7) years for each of the class C felonies of Tampering in the first degree and Possession of a Controlled Substance. Pursuant to the plea agreement, all of Buckner's sentences were ordered to run concurrently with one another, as well as the sentence for which she was on probation.

A class B felony carries a maximum penalty of fifteen (15) years in prison, while a class C felony has a maximum of seven (7) years.