



**POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BURLINGTON**

MEDIA RELEASE

INCIDENT TYPE:	DATE/TIME REPORTED:	
Multiple crimes	07/11/2019 2215 Hours	
INCIDENT NUMBER:	LOCATION:	
19BU014581, 19BU014557, 19CC006750, 19BU014482, 19BU014312, 19BU014284, 19BU013146	Multiple locations	
INVESTIGATOR:	INVESTIGATOR CONTACT:	
Corporal Henry	658-2704	
AUTHOR:	APPROVED BY:	
DC Murad	DC Murad	
SUSPECT:	AGE:	SUSPECT ADDRESS:
Eric Breeyear	36	Burlington
Tyler J. Sears	28	Transient
SUSPECT DISPOSITION:		
Arrested and lodged for multiple alleged offenses		

NARRATIVE:

Today Burlington Police Officers arrested Eric Breeyear, 36, of Burlington and Tyler J. Sears, 28, transient. These two individuals are suspected in a rash of crimes that have occurred over the past few weeks in Burlington, on the campus of the University of Vermont, in South Burlington, and in Colchester. Burlington Police Corporal Michael Henry and other officers, including detectives from South Burlington and Colchester, untangled a number of offenses and separate cases. Corporal Henry ultimately filed affidavits charging Mr. Breeyear and Mr. Sears with a variety of crimes, including grand larceny, petit larceny, identity theft, possession of stolen property, false pretense, and unlawful mischief. Many of these crimes included multiple counts.

What follows is a preliminary accounting and partial listing of the alleged crimes associated with these individuals, specifically those alleged crimes outlined in Corporal Henry's affidavits:

On June 26, 2019, at approximately 0602 hours, a victim stated her vehicle had been ransacked in the driveway of her home in Burlington. During a subsequent interview with police, she indicated that her credit cards had been used at a Price Chopper on Hinesburg Road in South Burlington. Officers retrieved video from that location and identified Eric Breeyear, 36, as the suspect. They further confirmed the identification by comparing the store surveillance video to social media pictures.



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On July 8, at approximately 0927 hours, a second victim reported her vehicle had been broken into overnight in Burlington. Her debit card was taken from the car and was used in an attempted purchase at Market 32 on Shelburne Road. Officers later retrieved video surveillance and identified the suspect as Tyler J. Sears, 28.

Later on July 8, at approximately 1326 hours, a third victim reported that his and his wife's wallets had been stolen from their vehicle in Burlington. The victim advised that both his and his wife's credit cards were used at Market 32 on Shelburne Road. Officers obtained store surveillance video and identified Mr. Breeyear using the cards at the register.

On July 10 at approximately 0737 hours, a fourth victim reported her Toyota vehicle had been stolen from her driveway in Burlington. At approximately 0947 hours, police located the vehicle behind a residence on Pearl Street. The victim was notified and responded to take possession of it using a second set of keys. She allowed it to be taken by police and processed for evidence and photographed. The vehicle showed damage that had not been there prior to its being stolen.

Later on July 10 at approximately 1523 hours, Corporal Henry responded to a trespass complaint and encountered Tyler Sears, whom he knew from previous law-enforcement encounters. He observed Sears to be in possession of a key fob for a Toyota of the type stolen. Corporal Henry seized the key fob in anticipation of applying for a warrant but Mr. Sears instead provided written and video consent. He indicated the key fob was not his but belonged to Eric Breeyear. Mr. Sears also indicated that Mr. Breeyear was staying at a location on Pearl Street.

Also on July 10, a fifth victim informed Colchester police that his wife's credit cards—which, along with her wallet, were believed to have been stolen from her vehicle—were being used in multiple fraudulent transactions at Price Chopper in Colchester and at Dunkin Donuts and Rite-aid (Walgreens) in Burlington. Colchester Detective Sergeant Don Demar spoke with technicians at those stores to ascertain whether he could obtain video evidence from the locations. Employees at the Rite-aid identified the person making the fraudulent transactions as Tyler Sears owing to numerous previous experiences with him.

On July 11, at approximately 0833 hours, Corporal Henry and other Burlington Police Officers accompanied a deputy of the Chittenden County Sheriff's Office who was conducting an eviction process at a location on Pearl Street. Burlington Police Officers do not perform evictions, but do work with sheriffs to ensure everyone's safety. In this instance, Corporal Henry also believed Mr. Breeyear to be at the location. When law enforcement made entry, they discovered several occupants, including Mr. Breeyear, who was found to be in possession of



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credit cards that did not bear his name. Mr. Breeyear was arrested and brought to the Burlington Police Department.

Later on July 11, at approximately 0930, staff at the McKenzie House Apartments called to report a transient sleeping on their lawn. Officer responded and identified Mr. Sears and took him into custody.

Later on July 11, the owner of the stolen Toyota came to the Burlington Police Department and identified the key fob Corporal Henry had recovered as hers. She also found a Walgreens receipt in the vehicle that was not hers. Corporal Henry was able to associate that receipt with the purchases allegedly made by Tyler Sears, and thereby connect the stolen car to the stolen wallet and credit cards from the Colchester case. Those credit cards were further confirmed to be the card in Mr. Breeyear's possession at the time of his arrest.

Corporal Henry's multi-day investigation into motor vehicle larcenies culminated with two arrests and a slew of charges, closing five criminal cases for the Burlington Police Department, one criminal case for the South Burlington Police Department, one criminal case for the Colchester Police Department, and one warrant for the Williston Police Department. Additional search warrants are anticipated for the arrestees' property, which may result in more evidence linking them to additional crimes. Additionally, officers obtained non-testimonial orders for buccal swabs and fingerprints for both Mr. Breeyear and Mr. Sears, making their DNA and prints available for other officers who may have open cases that match these individuals' alleged modi operandi.

Tyler J. Sears was charged with one count Grand Larceny (case 19BU014482); two counts Possession of Stolen Property (cases 19BU014482 and 19BU014284); one count Identity Theft (case 19BU014284); one count False Pretense (case 19BU014284); one count Petit Larceny (19BU014284); and one count Unlawful Mischief (case 19BU014482).

Eric Breeyear was charged with three counts of Identity Theft (cases 19BU013146 and 19BU014312); three counts Petit Larceny (cases 19BU013146 and 19BU014312); three counts False Pretense (cases 19BU013146 and 19BU014312); and one count Possession of Stolen Property (case 19BU014581).

South Burlington Police Chief Shawn Burke states, "The criminality of Breeyear has been pervasive, having a profound negative effect on the citizens and business community of South Burlington. Acts of theft are often thought of as minor crimes, but in this instance the aggregate effect of his actions deserves meaningful prosecution."



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The UVM Police state, “Mr. Sears and Mr. Breeyear have been identified by UVM Police as suspects in multiple larcenies on the UVM campus in recent weeks (19UV003551 and 19UV003651). Both men have now been trespassed from campus. These incidents caused significant disruption for the UVM community. Collaborative efforts between community members and local police agencies have led to resolution of many of these incidents.”

Burlington Deputy Police Chief Jon Murad states, “I can’t say enough about the good police work in this case. Individually, these crimes may appear small, but cumulatively they form a much larger pattern of criminality. Moreover, for our neighbors these kinds of crimes aren’t small at all—they represent a loss of property and money, and the hassle of dealing with credit card companies and banks to address identity theft and fraudulent charges. Corporal Henry clearly took that to heart, and put in tremendous effort connecting the dots in a complicated series of crimes. Thanks to him and other officers from our department and others, two alleged criminals with hundreds of law-enforcement contacts between them will now face consequences for victimizing our neighbors in Burlington and throughout Chittenden County.”

Criminals who victimize their neighbors are responsible for their own behavior. Nevertheless, neighbors can take precautions to minimize the likelihood of having property stolen. The Burlington Police Department urges neighbors to lock their vehicles, store their vehicle and house keys in locations other than their vehicles, and to ensure that objects of apparent value—such as wallets, electronic items, sports equipment, backpacks, etc.—are not left in vehicles in ways that leave them visible to thieves.

Anyone with additional information about these incidents or individuals is asked to contact the Burlington Police Department at (802) 658-2704. If you believe you may have been a victim of crimes like those described here and have not yet reported them, please report them to your local police.



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ERIC M. BREEYEAR (photo 7/11/19)



TYLER J. SEARS (photo 3/14/19)