

Serial Southern Illinois Mail Thief Sentenced To Prison, Had Warrants From Troy and Collinsville

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ST. LOUIS - The United States Attorney Steven D. Weinhoeft Southern District of Illinois today released information that a man who repeatedly stole mail from mailboxes in Southern Illinois is heading to prison. Seth W. Sorensen, 45, the serial mail thief, was sentenced today to one year and one day in prison and two years of court supervision after his release.

Last December, Sorensen pled guilty in federal court to one count of mail theft and two counts of possession of stolen mail. The federal charges stemmed from three separate incidents that occurred over a four-day stretch in February 2019. On Feb. 23, 2019, a

person in Okawville, Illinois, watched as Sorensen drove mailbox to mailbox stealing mail from houses on M&M Lane and R&R Drive. The person immediately reported the incident to the Okawville Police Department, who quickly identified Sorensen as the primary suspect and discovered that he had an active warrant for burglary out of Troy, Illinois.

The United States Attorney's Office said on Feb. 24, 2019, Okawville Police went to an apartment where Sorensen was staying and arrested him on the warrant. During the arrest, officers found a trash bag in Sorensen's possession that contained stolen mail belonging to 26 different victims at 19 different residences in Southern Illinois. Sorensen spent the remainder of February 24 and February 25 in the Madison County Jail.

The U.S. Attorney's Office continued: "On Feb. 26, 2019, Sorensen was released from jail. He walked from the jail to an apartment complex on South Morrison Avenue in Collinsville, Illinois, where a resident noticed him peeking into mailboxes. The resident eventually confronted Sorensen and grabbed a pile of stolen mail from his hands.

"Authorities said the mail was addressed to multiple people in different units within the complex. At least one of the letters was addressed to the resident herself. After the confrontation, Sorensen fled the area on foot. The resident called the Collinsville Police Department. A short time later, Collinsville police stopped Sorensen as he was walking.

"Sorensen identified himself by showing them the discharge paperwork he had received from the Madison County Jail earlier that morning. Sorensen initially denied looking through any mailboxes at the apartment complex or having any stolen mail in his possession, but the officers noticed mail hanging out of his pocket addressed to individuals on South Chestnut Street – the very street Sorensen was walking down when he was stopped.

"When asked about the mail in his pocket, Sorensen said he found the mail in the street and intended to return it but did not know where the individuals lived. Collinsville police reminded Sorensen that letters have addresses on them. Sorensen was arrested that evening after a short investigation."

This case was investigated by the Okawville Police Department, the Collinsville Police Department, and the United States Postal Inspection Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Luke J. Weissler.