

Brothers, friend caught attempting to steal large-screen TV in Austin

Written by Administrator

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Two brothers and a female friend were allegedly caught attempting to take a large screen television from a home in Austin on Wednesday, October 20.

Taken into custody were brothers John M. Vest, 20; Jeffrey W. Vest, 19; and Jessica N. Benson, 23, all of Austin.

A possible burglary at a house on Factory Drive was reported to county dispatchers at 11:16 p.m. that evening. Lt. Shawn Hurt with the Austin Police Department and Deputy Joe Johnson of the Sheriff's Department responded.

A statement by a neighbor indicated that he saw a woman walk from the residence to the street. Two men then appeared pushing a big screen TV onto a rear porch. They stepped off the porch just as an Austin patrol car arrived and shone a spotlight on the house and the TV. Both men jumped a rear fence and fled the scene on foot. Information from relatives who lived in the area provided identification for all three of the suspects.

Lt. Hurt found Benson walking near Mann and Paulanna Avenues. Though the woman said she had been walking from an Austin business, she was taken into custody and driven back to the scene by the officer.

John Vest had appeared at the scene as well, denying any involvement in the burglary. Both were transported to the Scott County Security Center.

Deputy Rex Herald located Jeffrey Vest at Village Apartments, where Benson lives. He too was taken to the jail in Scottsburg, where he allegedly gave a statement telling how he and his brother gained entry and then moved the TV. He said Benson did not go into the residence but knew what the Vests were doing.

Each Vest brother was charged with burglary, a Class B felony, and theft, a Class D felony. Benson was charged with both burglary and aiding a burglary, a Class B felony, since she allegedly acted as the brothers' "look-out." The trio appeared in Scott Circuit Court on Friday, October 22, and preliminary pleas of not guilty were entered for them. Each was assigned a jury trial date of March 8, 2011, and the serves of a public defender. Bail for each was set at \$60,000 corporate surety or full cash by Judge Roger Duvall.