

Scottsburg man allegedly bilks trusting relative out of \$60,000

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Bail for a Scottsburg man charged with 21 felony counts of forgery and theft has been set at \$50,000 corporate surety/full cash, about \$10,000 less than the amount he is accused of having stolen from a relative.

Dale S. Westmoreland, 36, entered a not guilty plea to the charges in Scott Circuit Court on Thursday, January 27, that he signed his relative's name to several checks drawn on the relative's checking account.

Westmoreland lost his job about two years ago and moved in with the victim. He ran errands for the relative, including making purchases with the victim's debit card.

After receiving a phone call about a withdrawal, the relative discovered that a checking account was overdrawn by about \$900. Further, the account's records showed "...large deposits and numerous withdrawals..." made over a period of time of which the victim was unaware.

Additional records from a trust fund company reflected more than a dozen, unauthorized withdrawals ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

In total, Lt./Detective Mike Nichols of the Scottsburg Police Department stated in the probable cause affidavit that the victim estimated her loss at approximately \$60,000. Records provided by the victim's trust fund company listed the loss at \$52,820. Westmoreland had been arrested by officers with the Scott County Sheriff's Department on November 20. He allegedly had three checks in his possession that were made out to him and purportedly signed by the relative.

Paperwork discovered in Westmoreland's room reflected ten ATM withdrawals at a Harrison County casino. A local bank provided video of Westmoreland allegedly making 24 withdrawals in October.

Westmoreland was assigned a jury trial date of June 6 at his initial hearing in Scott Circuit Court.

His case has been assigned to a public defender.