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# Keizer crime featured on national television



A Lowe's located in Keizer Station

FILE PHOTO, Keizertimes

**BY JOEY CAPPELETTI**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Three months ago, a Keizer resident filmed as two men loaded thousands of dollars worth of electrical wire into their Lowe's shopping carts, walked past a powerless security guard and drove off with the stolen merchandise. The video, filmed in Keizer on Aug. 23, received over 25,000 views in less than a week and angered community members with how "blatant" the crime was.

No arrests have been made in connection to the crime — but that didn't stop celebrity TV host Dr. Phil from exploring the issue on a Dec. 2 episode of his show.

In an episode titled "License to Steal: The Shoplifting Crisis" Dr. Phil explored "the current shoplifting crisis that is sweeping the nation" and brought on Keizer resident Andrew Sullivan, who filmed the Lowe's theft, and Keizer police Lt. Andrew Copeland to discuss the issue. The episode aired at 3 p.m. on Dec. 2 on KOIN channel 6, after press time for the paper.

The show was filmed live on Nov. 10 and while Sullivan appeared over Skype for the conversation, Copeland said producers flew him down to Hollywood for a couple of days to appear on the show live.

"It was a good experience. What I really appreciate is Dr. Phil's perspective on life in general. I think he is a good man," said Copeland. "He was really appreciative of the other sergeant and I when we came on the show and he treated us really well."

A Tucson store manager, whose physical confrontation with a shoplifter was caught on video and went viral, also appeared on the show. Sullivan and Copeland both said one of the more interesting interviews on the show was with a

self-admitted organized retail criminal.

"They had a career shoplifter that made like \$250,000 a year shoplifting. They muffled his voice and covered his face," said Sullivan. "But overall, I think it's going to be a pretty good show. It's really interesting."

One of the main topics discussed during the episode, according to Sullivan and Copeland, was the inability for law enforcement to punish shoplifters. Copeland said if he'd caught the Lowe's shoplifters in the parking lot on Aug. 23, all he would have been able to do is hand them a ticket and hope they show up to court.

"Property crimes right now — stolen cars, shoplifts, anything that's property related — the Marion County jail has told us they're not taking right now," said Copeland. "So we give a ticket to show up to court in roughly 30 days in hopes that they will show up. The likelihood of someone, this (Lowe's shoplifting) group especially, showing up to court in 30 days probably would not happen. And then they would get a fail to appear warrant."

Copeland said large stores such as Lowe's often won't call police about thefts and if the store doesn't call, police can't do anything according to Copeland.

Lt. Trevor Wenning, spokesperson for the Keizer Police Department, said that in late October the department identified at least one suspect in the Lowe's theft. He said the department referred the case to the district attorney's office in late October and KPD is still waiting to see if the office plans to file charges.

Sullivan said the conversation on Dr. Phil, which he described as an "open forum," centered on the current challenges to stopping shoplifters and what the possible solutions might be.

"It's up to us as citizens to change things, it's not the police. They just enforce, I get it. But we all need to sit down and come up with some kind of a solution," said Sullivan.

The show aired on CBS, which is KOIN 6 in the Salem and Portland area, at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 2. A CBS spokesperson was unable to give a date that the episode would be re-aired but said clips of the show would be available on their website and YouTube page.

**Dr. Phil**