

Safeway employee quits, returns two months later to start fire at store

By JOEY CAPPELETTI
Of the Keizertimes

A former Safeway employee was arrested on Feb. 4 after returning to a Keizer Safeway two months after he quit and lighting a fire in the store's bathroom, setting off the sprinkler system and causing \$1,500 in damages according to police reports.

The incident occurred on Jan. 25 and a weeklong Keizer Police Department investigation led to the arrest of 30-year-old George Samuel Bond, who is a Marion County resident. He is being charged with arson in the second degree and criminal mischief in the first degree following the arrest.

According to a Keizer police probable cause statement, employees at the Safeway in Keizer reported on the evening of Jan. 25 that a male subject had entered the bathroom and started a fire.

The police statement said that video surveillance showed a man wearing a hoodie entering the bathroom at approximately 8:30 p.m. and exiting at 8:40 p.m. - no longer wearing a hoodie. Employees estimated that the fire began between 8:30 p.m. and 8:45 p.m.

The fire activated the sprinkler

system and flooded the bathroom, hallway and the deli section of the store. The manager of the Safeway told Keizer police, according to the statement, that the cost to repair the bathroom and flooded areas was \$1,555.

The probable cause statement also says that after reviewing the surveillance video, three Safeway employees stated that they recognized the man who left the bathroom shortly before the fire started as Bond, who had worked at the Safeway until he quit in November of 2021.

Two of the employees who identified Bond worked with him in the meat section of the store, according to the police statement.

Keizer police detective Tim Lathrop wrote in the probable cause statement that he interviewed Bond at the Keizer Police Department on the evening of Feb. 4 and showed him surveillance photos, which Bond admitted were photos of him.

Lathrop wrote that Bond admitted going to Safeway on the evening of Jan. 25 but "repeatedly denied setting the fire in the bathroom even though he was the only person in the mens bathroom on the evening of Jan. 25."



The Safeway located in Keizer.

Photo by JOEY CAPPELETTI of Keizertimes

Lathrop added that Bond told him that he was "a prophet and preached to people and that he was waiting for a fire to come."

Bond is scheduled to appear in court on March 7 and was released with the condition that he does not have any contact with Safeway.

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