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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Authorities Searching for the ‘*Downton Abbey* Addict’ *Ex-con can’t stop stealing DVDs of the popular television series*

COLUMBUS, OH—A Central Ohio man, known as the “*Downton Abbey* Addict” due to his predilection for stealing DVD and Blu-ray box sets of the popular British drama, has been named “Fugitive of the Week” by Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.

Branden Joseph Deel, 30, of the city’s east side has a fresh warrant for his arrest after previously serving time in jail in August for stealing dozens of box sets worth thousands of dollars from several Franklin County retailers. He also was incarcerated earlier in the year after being convicted of similar thefts in Delaware County.

“While trends clearly indicate that more and more Americans are ‘cutting the cord’ and turning to online video streaming, our prosecutors aren’t necessarily seeing a decline in thieves targeting DVDs and Blu-ray discs,” said City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.

According to court records, Deel began his *Downton Abbey* disc binge on January 1, 2014 when he stole 12 DVD box sets worth a total retail value of \$560.88 and has continued to target retailers since then.

Deel’s two-year crime spree seems to have been interrupted only by temporary periods of incarceration and it appears, upon release, he picked up right where he left off. After serving time in jail in Delaware County in February and March of this year, Deel was released and found himself back in jail, this time in Franklin County, in August. He was eventually released, placed on probation, and given a 180-day suspended sentence.

Apparently undeterred, Deel was caught stealing 12 DVD box sets and other items valued at \$655.86 from a northwest Columbus retailer on October 12, 2015. He was able to escape by reportedly jumping into the rear passenger side window of a getaway car driven by a female accomplice.

“I can’t say whether Mr. Deel is binge watching *Downton Abbey* or selling the box sets for drug money, but I at least give him credit for having better taste than most thieves,” said First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick. “We usually deal with people who steal items like powdered baby formula to cut drugs, not someone who’s trafficking episodes of *Masterpiece Theatre*.”

Along with multiple counts of theft, Deel’s past criminal history includes charges of felony drug possession, obstructing official business, tampering with evidence, felony weapons possession, criminal trespass, and recklessly causing serious physical harm.

Anyone with information on Branden Joseph Deel is asked to contact First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick at 614.645.8874 or brhedrick@columbus.gov.

WANTED

The Downton Abbey Addict



BRANDEN JOSEPH DEEL

DOB: 8/29/1985 (Age 30)

Height: 6'1" **Weight:** 155

Hair: Brown **Eyes:** Green

Last Known Address:

3024 Medina Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43224

Case Numbers:

2015 CRB 025905

Charge(s):

2313.02 – Theft