

Contact: Bill R. Hedrick
Phone: 614.645.8874
Email: brhedrick@columbus.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Authorities Declare: ‘One of the Stupidest Scams We’ve Seen’ Is Proving Effective in Central Ohio

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. has named a North Side woman wanted on seven counts of theft as his latest “Fugitive of the Week” to highlight a growing crime trend that has law enforcement and retailers concerned.

Thirty-three year old Jennifer M. Niziolek has five warrants for her arrest after being accused of taking advantage of customer service return policies to steal over \$2000 from area retailers.

“Retail theft, in all its derivations, is a daily battle,” said City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. “Experts estimate that over \$10 billion in goods are stolen from U.S. merchants each year and consumers end up bearing the brunt of those costs.”

Niziolek’s methods are far from sophisticated. According to reports, she typically will enter a store, place items in a cart and then head to a customer service desk where she attempts to exchange the items for store credit, gift cards, or merchandise vouchers without anything resembling a receipt. On the occasions when she is denied a refund, she resorts to even less refined techniques and simply leaves the customer service desk with the items in her cart and walks out the door.

On January 2, 2015, Niziolek did just that. After her fraudulent attempt to exchange two infant car seats, a Hoover Wet Vac, and a Shark Wet Mop Vacuum was denied at the service desk of a Graceland area store, she walked out the door with the items valued at \$619.97.

At 2:14 p.m. on January 20, 2015 she returned to the same store and attempted to exchange a Keurig coffee maker and other assorted items worth a total of \$212.89. After being denied a refund again, she walked out of the store with the items in her cart.

Less than an hour later, she appeared at an Easton area retailer where she placed several items in a cart and proceeded to exchange them for a merchandise voucher worth \$456.83.

Niziolek struck the same store again on March 19, 2015 when she placed various plumbing fixtures in a cart and exchanged them for a merchandise voucher worth \$519.20.

On March 29, 2015 Niziolek targeted another Graceland area retailer, placing several bedding items in a cart and then claiming they were unwanted gifts at the customer service desk, where she received a gift card worth \$359.96 in exchange for the items.

“I don’t think Ms. Niziolek will be appearing in an episode of *Criminal Minds* anytime soon, but her rudimentary scheme seems to work at least part of the time,” said First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick, who leads the *JusticeNet* fugitive apprehension program on behalf of City Attorney Pfeiffer.

Anyone with information on Jennifer M. Niziolek is asked to contact First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick at 614.645.8874 or brhedrick@columbus.gov.

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WANTED



JENNIFER
NIZIOLEK

DOB: 5/03/1982 (Age 33)

Height: 5'3" **Weight:** 140
Hair: Blonde **Eyes:** Green

Last Known Address:
2454 Vining Dr.
Columbus, Ohio 43229

Case Number(s):
2015 CRB 005022 | 2015 CRB 005029 | 2015 CRB 006993
2015 CRB 007342 | 2015 CRB 013510

Charge(s):
2913.02 – Theft (five counts)
2913.02(A3) – Theft by Deception
2313.02 – Petty Theft