

Cheektowaga Police arrest City of Tonawanda career criminal

By **Jim Herr** - January 12, 2018



CHEEKTOWAGA – A man who escaped the custody of the City of Tonawanda Police Department in 2009 – only to turn himself in during a press conference about the escape a short time later – was arrested Wednesday by Cheektowaga Police after he stole items from Walmart Wednesday evening.

Assistant Chief of Police Jim Speyer tells Cheektowaga Chronicle that Derek J. Schlifke, 30, of Warren Drive in the City of Tonawanda, was arrested for Petit Larceny and Criminal Impersonation. He also had outstanding arrest warrants from the City of Tonawanda for Grand Larceny of a vehicle, credit cards, and a rifle.

The shoplifting happened around 8 pm. Mr. Schlifke stole several food items from the store and fled in a Toyota Rav 4 according to police. He gave officers a different name after he was pulled over by officers on Union Road just North of Walden Avenue.

It was eventually discovered that he had two outstanding warrants from the City of Tonawanda and one from the City of Buffalo.

"Grateful that he got apprehended in Cheektowaga," said City of Tonawanda Police Captain Fredric Foels. "We've dealt with him many times."

Mr. Foels tells Cheektowaga Chronicle that one warrant was issued after Mr. Schlifke stole a rifle. Another was issued after he stole a Jeep Grand Cherokee on December 17th. Inside the Jeep was a wallet containing credit cards which police said were used by Mr. Schlifke until a security hold was issued.

"The detectives at one time had a phone conversation with him, and he even told the detectives where he dumped the car off," added Mr. Foels. "He went on the low, and then we couldn't locate him, and that's where the warrants stood."

Authorities later located the Jeep at the Bon-Ton department store on Sheridan Drive in the Town of Tonawanda.

This isn't the first encounter with the law for Mr. Schlifke. The [Niagara Gazette reported back in 2009](#) that he escaped custody after being arrested for breaking into several vehicles and according to the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, he completed probation supervision in August 2017 after serving time in Erie County for a charge of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the 4th – a Felony.

"Now he's down at the holding center," said Mr. Foels. "At some point in time in the future once he gets clear with his Cheektowaga case – he won't go anywhere because of these warrants – we'll have him down here and we'll be able to serve the two warrants for stealing the car, using the credit cards, and when he stole the rifle."

He will also answer to a warrant out of Buffalo for Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance.