

FILED  
12-17-2019  
Clerk of Circuit Court  
Cindy R. Hamre Incha  
2019CF000487

STATE OF WISCONSIN

CIRCUIT COURT  
BRANCH IV

JEFFERSON COUNTY

STATE OF WISCONSIN,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case No. 19CF

JANELLE J. GERICKE,  
254 East John Street,  
Jefferson, WI 53549,  
DOB: 07/12/1990, W/F,  
Height: 5 ft., 5 in., Weight: 120 lb.,  
Eyes: Brown, Hair: Blonde,

Defendant.

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**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

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Special Agent Dorinda Freymiller, of the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation, first being duly sworn, states the following:

**COUNT 1: BURGLARY [As to Victim D's residence]:**

On or about February 7, 2019, in the City of Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin, the defendant did intentionally enter a dwelling without the consent of a person in lawful possession of the place, and with intent to steal personal property, in violation of Wis. Stat. §§ 943.10(1m)(a), and 939.50(3)(f), a Class F Felony; and upon conviction may be fined not more than \$25,000, or imprisoned not more than 12 years and 6 months, or both.

**PROBABLE CAUSE**

Between February 2018 and June 2019, Janelle Gericke, the defendant, engaged in a scheme by which she entered, or attempted to enter, private residences of persons she had reason to believe would not be home. In most instances, this occurred while the homeowners were attending the funeral of a family member. In such instances, the deceased person's online obituary

listed the homeowners as surviving relatives along with the date and time of funeral services. If confronted, Gericke would explain that she was there to complete a transaction arising from Facebook.

### **Victim A's Residence**

On February 24, 2018, at approximately 5:43 p.m., Jefferson County Sheriff's Deputy Jeremy Franke responded to a report of a burglary at a residence located in Watertown, Jefferson County, Wisconsin. Deputy Franke spoke with the resident of this address, Victim A, aged 82, as well as Victim A's Power of Attorney and Victim A's girlfriend's son. Deputy Franke learned from them that Victim A's long-term girlfriend had recently passed away and that her funeral had been at 11:00 a.m. that day, with visitation services beginning at 9:00 a.m. When Victim A returned home following the funeral, he found a note sticking inside his front door. The note stated: "I was here to pick up the stuff through Facebook. I came in to the house and the items weren't by the door. So I didn't leave my money. I tried Facebook messaging you but you haven't responded."

Victim A's girlfriend's son reviewed video surveillance footage of the residence from earlier in the day of February 24, 2018, and observed that a 4-door silver Chevrolet Cobalt drove up the driveway to the residence while everyone had been at his mother's services. A new video surveillance system had recently been installed, and the wrong date and time were reflected. The date shown on the current day, February 24, 2018, was shown as May 18, 2017. The time on the video was determined to be off by two hours and seventeen minutes. The time shown on the video at the time the Chevrolet Cobalt drove up was 13:00. The actual time the incident took place was between approximately 10:45 a.m. and 10:55 a.m.

Complainant has reviewed this surveillance footage and observed the following: the surveillance footage shows that three minutes after the car arrives, a white female with dark hair,

dark winter parka, dark yoga pants, and dark Ugg style boots approaches the front door. The female is holding a piece of paper in her hand. The female rings the doorbell, waits a moment, checks the door handle (which does not open), then reaches into her right-hand-side jacket pocket. The female then removes something out of her pocket and uses it to open the door. The female then enters the residence. The surveillance footage shows the female exiting the residence through the same door at 13:11. As the female closes the door, she places a piece of paper in it. At 13:12 on the surveillance footage, the silver Chevrolet Cobalt backs out of the driveway toward the highway.

Deputy Franke asked Victim A if anything was missing and Victim A told him that when he arrived home after the funeral, he found a cabinet in his bedroom with the doors open. Deputy Franke went with Victim A to look for anything missing from the cabinet and Victim A determined that his checkbook was missing. Victim A informed Deputy Franke that he did not give anyone consent to enter his residence or to take his checkbook. Victim A's Power of Attorney stated that he did not give anyone consent to enter the residence or take the checkbook. Victim A's Power of Attorney stated that the checking account associated with the checkbook was closed and that no checks were passed.

On May 8, 2019, Special Agent Jeffrey Twing contacted another son of Victim A's girlfriend. Special Agent Twing asked this son if Victim A had ever sold anything on Facebook Marketplace, and this son stated that Victim A did not have a cell phone or a computer.

On May 3, 2019, Detective Sergeant Donald Hunter from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office submitted the note from Victim A's door to the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory to be processed for fingerprints. On May 8, 2019, Special Agent Dorinda Freymiller was notified that a print was located on the note and submitted to AFIS. AFIS identified the fingerprint as belonging to Janelle J. Kopp. Wisconsin Department of Transportation records showed that Janelle J. Kopp was married and changed her name to Janelle J. Gericke. Gericke (hereinafter the defendant) has

been employed by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office as a sworn deputy assigned to work at the jail since February 2016. Special Agent Freymiller has viewed the surveillance footage of this incident and has met the defendant in person and recognizes the female in the video as the defendant.

### **Victim B's Residence**

On April 26, 2019, Detective Sergeant Hunter spoke with Victim B regarding an incident that had occurred on October 31, 2018, at approximately 6:00 p.m. Victim B stated that she was getting ready to leave her residence, located in Lake Mills, Jefferson County, Wisconsin, with her husband in order to take their child trick-or-treating.

Victim B's husband saw a strange car in the driveway and Victim B heard their dogs barking. Victim B said that the dogs normally do not bark unless there is somebody in the area. Victim B went out of the garage and around the end of her home and saw a white female standing on the patio looking in the door to their residence. Victim B said that she did not recognize the person right away. Victim B said that the female began walking down the side of the house and that Victim B then recognized her as the defendant. Victim B knew the defendant because the defendant bowled on the same bowling team as Victim B's husband and Victim B's father, a law enforcement officer with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. Victim B's husband said that he had not gone to bowling that night because of trick-or-treating. Victim B's husband said that bowling practice usually starts around 6:15 p.m.

Victim B said that the defendant noticed her right away and that the defendant said something to the effect of, "I didn't know this was your house." The defendant mentioned something about Facebook Marketplace and said that she was looking to buy a shelf. The defendant talked with Victim B and her husband about a name or address on their street, but neither of them recognized the name or address.

### **Victim C's Residence**

On May 7, 2019, Special Agent Freymiller spoke with Jefferson County Sheriff's Deputy David Drayna regarding an incident in January 2019, where the defendant showed up at the home of a deceased Lake Mills municipal employee, Victim C, during his funeral services. On January 5 and 6, 2019, Deputy Drayna worked patrol duty in the Town of Lake Mills. Deputy Drayna made a couple of trips past Victim C's house, located in Lake Mills, Jefferson County, Wisconsin. Deputy Drayna drove an unmarked squad car.

It was dark outside and near the end of Deputy Drayna's shift when he drove past Victim C's house and noticed an individual standing on the front porch. The porch light was not on. Deputy Drayna thought it was unusual for someone to be at the house, so he stopped, parked, and called to the individual asking why they were there. As the individual approached his vehicle, Deputy Drayna recognized it to be the defendant.

The defendant explained to Deputy Drayna that she was there to purchase a baby item from Facebook Marketplace. The defendant was pregnant from 2018 into 2019 and delivered her child on April 18, 2019. Deputy Drayna asked the defendant whether she realized whose home she was at; the defendant said she did not. The defendant told Deputy Drayna the name and address of the seller she was looking for. Deputy Drayna searched for the name and address the defendant gave him but was unable to locate anything in the area matching either one.

Special Agent Freymiller has reviewed text messages from the defendant's cell phone. On January 5, 2019, at 6:51 p.m. there is a text message sent from the defendant's phone to a recipient identified as "Drayna," which states "I got my bouncer. Im the idiot. She gave me the right address, it was 1020. I accidentally typed 1030..." followed by 4 emojis and a photograph of a Graco brand baby swing. Victim C's street address includes house number 1030.

On September 9, 2019, Special Agent Freymiller spoke with the homeowner and resident of house number 1020 on the same street as Victim C in Lake Mills, Wisconsin. This homeowner confirmed that she resided at this location in January 2019 and remarked that she frequently sells items through Facebook Marketplace. Complainant asked this homeowner if she sold a Graco brand baby swing through Facebook Marketplace in January 2019. The homeowner said that she did not sell a baby swing to anyone through Facebook Marketplace in January 2019.

**Victim D's Residence (Count 1: Burglary)**

On February 7, 2019, at approximately 2:03 p.m., Victim D called the Fort Atkinson Police Department to report an unknown female in her residence, located in Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin, claiming to be there to clean. Fort Atkinson Police Officer Brian Enger met with Victim D, as well as her husband, their son, and his wife.

The family informed Officer Enger that earlier that day they had attended visitation and funeral services for their family member, another son of Victim D and her husband, from approximately 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Victim D returned home at approximately 11:40 a.m. When Victim D entered the residence, she encountered an unknown female in the kitchen. The female was described as Caucasian with dark brown or black hair, five and a half feet tall, in her mid-20's, with a slight build. The female wore black glasses, a black puffy jacket, a green and black winter hat with a pompom on top, and winter boots with fur on top.

Victim D stated that she asked the female who she was and that the female replied that she did not think anyone was supposed to be home. When asked what she was doing there, the female told Victim D and her family members that she was there to clean the residence. The female advised that she was responding to a Facebook posting. The female also stated that she worked for the Sheriff's Department but did not specify which one. Victim D and her family members

asked the female to leave and she complied. The female left in a gray 4-door Chevrolet passenger car with a black Labrador dog in the back seat.

On May 23, 2019, Special Agents Freymiller and Twing met with Victim D's son and daughter-in-law. Special Agent Twing was able to obtain a Facebook photo of the defendant, which included her wearing glasses. Five other Facebook photographs of similar white females wearing glasses were obtained and a photo lineup was developed. Special Agent Twing presented the photo lineup to Victim D's son, who reviewed the photos from number one to number six. Victim D's son stopped at photo number four and stated "kinda looks like her." Victim D's son spent the most time looking at this photograph. At the completion of his exam of the photo lineup he also stated, "the photos all look very similar but some were definitely not the suspect." He then left the kitchen area. Photo number four depicted the defendant. Victim D's daughter-in-law stated, "she had a very prominent Roman nose." Victim D's daughter-in-law asked if she would be able to see a side profile in the photos and Special Agent Twing stated that the photos are pretty much a frontal view. Special Agent Twing provided the photo lineup to Victim D's daughter-in-law. Victim D's daughter-in-law examined the photo lineup from photo number one to photo number six. When Victim D's daughter-in-law examined photo number four she stated, "there is the nose." Victim D's daughter-in-law continued to look through the photos to number six. After completing the photo lineup, she asked to relook at photo number one and photo number four. After examining these two photos, Victim D's daughter-in-law stated that the suspect that was in the residence looks like photo number four. Photo number four depicted the defendant.

#### **Chevrolet Cobalt and Dog Identified**

On May 3, 2019, Special Agent Twing conducted surveillance of the defendant's residence, located at 254 John Street, Jefferson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin. Special Agent Twing observed a Chevrolet Cobalt, registration AAV2109, in the driveway. According to Wisconsin Department

of Transportation records, AAV2109 is registered to a silver 2008 Chevrolet Cobalt, owned by Janelle Gericke, the defendant, of 254 John Street, Jefferson, Wisconsin.

On May 16, 2019, Special Agent Twing conducted surveillance of the defendant's residence and observed a black Labrador dog exit then reenter the residence.

### **Victim E's Residence**

On April 26, 2019, Detective Sergeant Hunter spoke with Victim E, who is a sworn law enforcement officer with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, regarding an incident that took place at her residence, located in Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin, earlier in April. On April 3, 2019, at 8:02 p.m., Victim E sent an email to all Jefferson County Sheriff's Department personnel, as well as personnel from surrounding police departments, advising that she would be out-of-state the following two days, Thursday and Friday, April 4 and 5, 2019. Victim E left for her trip at approximately 3:00 a.m. on April 4, 2019. Victim E advised that when her plane landed later in the day on April 4, 2019, and she was able to receive cellular service, she began receiving alerts on her phone from the camera system she had installed around her residence.

The surveillance footage shows a female walking around Victim E's property at approximately 8:12 a.m. on April 4, 2019. The video shows the female attempted to enter Victim E's residence through the front door and the rear sliding glass door. The video shows the female attempted to open a vehicle parked in Victim E's driveway. Video footage from the back of the house shows the female looking in and around a gas grill on the patio, attempting to locate a spare key to the residence. The female is Caucasian with dark brown, shoulder length hair, glasses, and is visibly pregnant. The female is wearing a black jacket with white insets on the sides and turquoise-lined hood, a light-colored shirt, dark pants, and white tennis shoes.

Victim E showed the surveillance footage to various Jefferson County Sheriff's deputies, including Deputies K.R. and A.W. Deputy K.R. first saw a brief portion of the video on

April 9, 2019, at a training with Victim E. Based on her brief look at the video, Deputy K.R. thought the female was in her 40s and possibly the mother of a suspect in another case. Deputy K.R. attended another training with Victim E on April 12, 2019, and asked Victim E if the female in the video was in fact the mother of the suspect; Victim E stated it was not. Deputy K.R. watched the video again, this time a longer portion, and immediately recognized the female in the video as the defendant. Deputy A.W. attended the same April 12, 2019, training as Deputy K.R. Deputy A.W. also viewed Victim E's surveillance footage. Deputy A.W. had previously viewed a still photograph from the attempted break-in on the Fort Atkinson Police Department website but had not recognized the female as the defendant at that time. When Victim E showed Deputy A.W. the surveillance video, however, Deputy A.W. was able to identify the female as the defendant based on the female's mannerisms, nose, shoes, jacket, and overall appearance. Victim E contacted the defendant about the video appearing to show her attempting to break-in to Victim E's residence. The defendant denied it was her but did state that she had the same shoes.

### **Victim F's Residence**

On June 14, 2019, Special Agents from the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigations conducted a surveillance operation in the Jefferson County vicinity related to their investigation into burglaries perpetrated by the defendant. Agents previously found an online obituary for a person with relatives in Fort Atkinson whose services were scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. that day, June 14, 2019.

Agents established surveillance at the defendant's residence and the residences of several of the deceased's relatives who were listed in the obituary; including his parents (Victim F) and brother (Victim G). At approximately 11:45 a.m. The defendant was seen placing her infant in her Chevrolet Cobalt, registration AAV2109, then driving away from her residence. The defendant drove south on Highway 26, then west on Highway 12 to Highway C, then to Highway J. The

defendant continued to Victim F's residence, located in Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin.

Special Agent Donald Todd conducted surveillance at Victim F's residence. Special Agent Todd observed the residence had brown siding and green trim. On the north side of the residence was a driveway and a white colored entrance door. On the northeast corner of the residence was a deck with a sliding glass door. At 11:59 a.m., Special Agent Todd observed a silver Chevrolet Cobalt bearing Wisconsin registration AAV2109 parked in the driveway of the residence. Special Agent Todd saw a female, whom he recognized as the defendant, walking outside on the north side of the house. The defendant walked out of Special Agent Todd's view near the northeast corner of the residence. A short time later, the defendant walked back to her vehicle and sat in the driver seat. After several seconds, the defendant exited her vehicle again and, again, walked out of Special Agent Todd's line of sight near the northeast corner of the residence. Several minutes later, Special Agent Todd observed the defendant return to her vehicle and sit in the driver seat. The defendant remained in the driver seat for about a minute. Special Agent Todd then saw the defendant exit her vehicle for a third time and walk to the white colored entrance door. Special Agent Todd saw the defendant open the door and enter the residence. Special Agent Todd was not able to see the defendant while she was inside the house. About 10 seconds later, the defendant exited the residence and walked back to her vehicle. At about 12:10 p.m., the defendant entered her vehicle, reversed out of the driveway, and left.

Special Agent Todd later looked through a window by the white colored entrance door and found it led to an attached utility room and the door was locked. Special Agent Freymiller spoke with Victim F, specifically the deceased's father, after he returned home from his son's funeral on June 14, 2019, and again on June 18, 2019. Victim F explained the white door is the entrance to what he referred to as his shed where he stores tools and other items; there is no door from inside

the shed leading into the house. He usually keeps this door locked and believes it was locked before and after he went to his son's funeral. Victim F did not see anything missing from their home or shed. Victim F did not give anyone permission to enter their home or shed while they were at their son's funeral.

### **Victim G's Residence**

After the defendant left Victim F's residence at approximately 12:10 p.m. on June 14, 2019, she drove south on County Road J, then turned eastbound on Highway 106, then turned north on Highway 26, then exited heading east on Highway 12 into Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. The defendant continued through town until she parked her vehicle near Victim G's residence, located in Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin. The defendant exited her vehicle, leaving her infant inside. The defendant walked up to the front door of Victim G's residence. She did not appear to gain entry to the house, then walked back to her vehicle.

Agents continued to surveil the defendant until approximately 12:50 p.m. At that time, Special Agent Freymiller contacted the defendant, identifying her in person.

On June 19, 2019, Special Agent Freymiller spoke with Victim G. Victim G has video cameras around his home and received an alert around 12:20 p.m. on June 14, 2019, as someone approached his home. Victim G described the person as a white female with long brown hair who had something white in her hand, which he thought looked like a tissue. The video showed the female open the screen door and attempt to open the main door via the handle. A second video showed the woman walk away several seconds later without entering the residence. Victim G shared the video with Special Agent Freymiller, who positively identified the female as the defendant, who was wearing the same clothes – short black yoga pants, black shoes, black fleece jacket – that the defendant was wearing when Special Agent Freymiller met with her later that day.

Your complainant is a Special Agent with the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigations, who bases her knowledge of this complaint on:

- the official law enforcement agency reports of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office prepared by Deputy Jeremy Franke, Detective Sergeant Donald Hunter, Detective Vaughn Johnson, and the reports of the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigations prepared by Special Agents Jeffrey Twing and Donald Todd, which reports were prepared in the normal course of law enforcement duties;
- statements by citizen informant(s), who are eyewitnesses to the facts they relate;
- statements by the defendant, which were made contrary to her penal interests; and
- the official records of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, which records are maintained in the normal course of business duties.

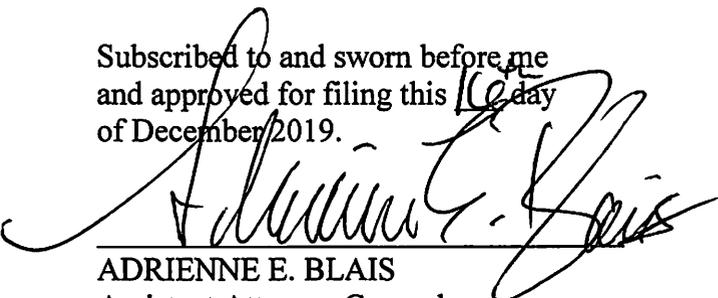
Based on the foregoing, the complainant believes this complaint to be true and correct.

This complaint contains a summary of facts necessary to establish probable cause. It does not contain all of the facts that are known to the complainant that may be relevant to this investigation.

Dated this 16 day of December 2019.

  
SPECIAL AGENT DORINDA FREYMILLER  
Wisconsin Department of Justice  
Division of Criminal Investigation  
Complainant

Subscribed to and sworn before me  
and approved for filing this 16 day  
of December 2019.

  
ADRIENNE E. BLAIS  
Assistant Attorney General  
State Bar #1085018

Wisconsin Department of Justice  
Post Office Box 7857  
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7857  
(608) 266-9619  
(608) 267-2778 (Fax)  
blaisae@doj.state.wi.us