

Holiday break-in spoils the spirit

Written by By Beth Blakeman Managing Editor
Friday, 28 January 2022 07:29



Rhonda Quintana, one of the owners of Quintana's Music got an unwelcome notification early in the morning Jan. 17. It was an alarm from Quintana's Music Center at 112 W. Coal Ave.

The notification of a break-in came too late to save the two signature model guitars that were stolen from the store — the third and fourth such instruments stolen in the past three weeks.

Quintana told the *Sun* that a similar break-in occurred Dec. 27.

Considering the clues she has to work from, she believes the late Sunday night-early Monday morning during the holiday season may account for part of the situation.

"The first time, they cut all the power, thinking our alarm system was internet-driven," she said. "They cut through the fence and pried open one of our back doors."

The alarm notification forced the thieves to leave quickly. They got two guitars and a couple hundred dollars and did thousands of dollars worth of property damage that time.

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Quintana says she hasn't been able to locate the guitars.

The scenario was a little different three weeks later when the alarm call came. Two more signature guitars were gone, but this time the store had been secured and the thieves were determined enough to leave a bent pipe, a broken door frame and a disintegrated cinderblock wall in their wake.

In talking with her neighbors, Quintana learned that hers was not the only business targeted.

The *Sun* talked to the alarm company as well as Don Diego's Restaurant at 801 Historic Hwy. 66 and Native Jewelers Supply at 213 S. Third St. and learned about people crawling through air conditioning vents and cut phone lines.

A Gallup police report for the break-in at Don Diego's on Jan. 8 at 3:12 am included a description of the metal sheeting for the A/C vent having been removed and some of the sheeting ripped out. A wrench and a hammer and shoe prints were found. Video of the incident did not give a clear shot of the person who rummaged through the cash register.

One of the owners at Native Jewelers Supply said a break-in during a holiday season that focused on his store and the two buildings next to him included damage to the meter boxes.

In the Gallup Police report on that break-in Dec. 29 between 8 and 9 pm, Officer Norman Bowman said he checked an underground tunnel that leads south, but had no contact with anyone. He also said he noticed someone had taken the fuses off three of the electric boxes and the meters were removed. He believed the suspect or suspects had cut power to the business and attempted to pry the back door open without success.

Quintana thinks the determination of the thieves is growing — that perhaps they are using a vehicle to break into the building. She is considering taking a different kind of action to protect her business. She wants to help downtown businesses located near her.

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She has reached out to Gallup City Councilor Linda Garcia, Dist. 1 in hopes of getting more police presence in the quiet holiday hours and starting a petition to put gates on the alleyway between First and Second Streets. Garcia told the *Sun*, she and the Quintanas plan to meet with the Gallup Police Department next week.

By Beth Blakeman
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