

Dorion returns in handcuffs

Former sheriff is booked, appears in court today to face charges

By Brad W. Gary of the Tribune
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Former Nez Perce County Sheriff Jim Dorion is escorted off a plane by a sheriff's deputy as he returns to Lewiston to face felony charges of accessory to burglary.

Escorted by a sheriff's deputy, ousted Nez Perce County Sheriff Jim Dorion walked off an airplane in handcuffs Tuesday evening.

Dorion, 49, was among the last passengers off a Delta Airlines commuter jet that landed at the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport. He was later booked into the Nez Perce County Jail, a building where the former sheriff once worked as a correction deputy.

He is expected to make his initial court appearance today on three counts of felony accessory to burglary. The charges were filed in Lewiston's 2nd District Court by the Idaho Attorney General's office. Dorion's return comes more than seven weeks after his arrest in Shreveport, La., on a warrant sought by the Idaho State Police.

Dressed in an orange T-shirt and blue jeans, Dorion held an article of clothing over the handcuffs as he stepped off the airplane at about 8:30 p.m. He was met on the tarmac by three uniformed sheriff's deputies manning two cars, who transported Dorion to a sallyport on the ground floor of the Nez Perce County Courthouse.

Dorion had been held in the Caddo Parish Correctional Center without bond since his arrest March 2. He waived an extradition hearing last week in Caddo District Court in Shreveport, giving Nez Perce County the green light to return him to Idaho.

The arrest by Caddo Parish sheriff's deputies marked the first time Dorion surfaced publicly since May 2008, when he told the Nez Perce County commissioners he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and amid allegations he had been "self medicating" with alcohol.

Dorion was initially placed on paid medical leave, but was removed from office four months later after the county was unsuccessful in attempts to contact Dorion to verify his condition. The sheriff was removed from office because he was no longer a Nez Perce County resident.

Shortly after he was placed on leave, the attorney general's office confirmed the agency was acting as a special prosecutor into a criminal investigation alleging possible misconduct by Dorion.

Charges filed by the state agency allege Dorion withheld information from Lewiston police over a two-year period while he was sheriff, and helped Lewiston resident Stephen Peak avoid capture in three previous alleged burglaries.

The attorney general's office is prosecuting the case. Dorion is represented by Boise attorney Joseph P. Filicetti.

It was not immediately known what time Dorion will appear in court today. He was being held Tuesday on a \$25,000 bond, according to a jail official.

If convicted, Dorion faces up to five years in prison and/or a \$50,000 fine.

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