

Suspicious purchases lead troopers to meth lab

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PALMER — Alaska State Troopers say it was a skeptical pharmacy employee that led them to a methamphetamine lab on Shenandoah Drive.

According to an affidavit Investigator Mike Ingram filed in the case against Thor J. Williamson, 42, of Anchorage, the tip came in May 8.

At the start of his affidavit, Ingram writes that state law holds that if a person buys more than six grams of pseudoephedrine in 30 days or more than 3.6 grams in a single day, that person is automatically considered to be cooking meth.

Pseudoephedrine is commonly found in cold medications that are available without a prescription but that are held behind the counter in Valley drug stores. Alaska law requires stores to keep a written or electronic log of anyone buying the cold medications, Ingram wrote.

Acting on the tip, Ingram said he “maintained a watch of possible future pseudoephedrine purchases made by Thor J. Williamson.” Ingram wrote that he also tailed Williams to his home on Shenandoah Drive and saw him driving a maroon Buick LeSabre on numerous occasions.

After that, he writes, the tips started coming in:

- On July 1, Fred Meyer reported Williamson bought 2.8 grams of pseudoephedrine.
- On July 6, Target reported he bought 1.2 grams.
- On July 6, just minutes after Target called, Walgreens reported Williams bought 2.8 grams.

That pencils out to 6.8 grams of the drugs in five day, which Ingram writes was enough to get a search warrant.

At 4.25 p.m. the same day as the Target and Walgreens purchases, Ingram and his colleagues with the Mat-Su Narcotics Team served that warrant on Williamson’s home. Williamson and his wife were there and Williamson told them his children live with him.

That first warrant allowed Ingram to look for receipts and purchases of chemicals used to make meth and to search Williamson. Ingram conducted that search, finding a packet of meth in Williamson’s wallet, the investigator wrote.

After he’d dropped Williamson at the Mat-Su Pre-Trial Facility, Ingram wrote that he got a warrant to search the house. In the garage, investigators turned up empty cold medicine boxes and blister packs, empty iodine bottles and a hydrogen chloride gas generator; all telltale signs of a meth lab.

“A search of the main residential structure resulted in finding meth pipes, syringes and other drug paraphernalia in every bedroom of the residence, including the children’s bedrooms,” Ingram wrote.

“During my tenure as an Alaska State Trooper, I have investigated well over 60 meth labs in the state

of Alaska and I know from my training and experience that there is no other reason to have the above listed chemicals found in the garage in the amounts and combination that were discovered (except for) the sole purpose of manufacturing methamphetamine.”

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