

# Deputies: Suspect tried to escape courthouse

He was found sitting in another courtroom wearing different shirt

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He went to court yesterday in a blue-and-white button-up shirt and gave prosecutors his name.

But after the convicted felon learned he was wanted on an outstanding warrant on charges he violated the terms of his probation, he ran to another courtroom, changed his shirt and, when sheriff's deputies discovered him, gave them a different name, prosecutors said.

Paul Vincent Allen, 35, of Glen Burnie, was arrested yesterday morning on the warrant as he tried to leave the county's Circuit Court in Annapolis. Deputies recognized Al-

len before he could get out the front door.

"Nobody gets away," Sheriff Ronald Bateman said through a spokesman.

Allen, who will appear in court again on Friday for a bail-review hearing, told Circuit Court Judge Ronald A. Silkworth yesterday he was not trying to skip out on his warrant. He said he left Silkworth's courtroom on the third floor and went to an empty courtroom on the second floor to meet his fiancée. He added that his mother, aunt and uncle were in the building.

"I wasn't trying to run anywhere," Allen told the court.

He did not say why he took off his shirt



**ALLEN**

— it was later found outside in a trash bin — or why he told deputies his last name was "Stevens."

According to prosecutors and deputies, Allen walked into court at about 9 a.m. and told Deputy State's Attorney Laura Kiessling he was there to address charges he violated his probation. While speaking with Kiessling, he noticed a handwritten notation on her docket: "Open Warrant."

Allen mentioned the note to Kiessling, who responded that he should sit down and wait for his case to be heard.

Instead, he left the courtroom, prosecutors said.

Deputies Doug Schwaab and Frank Blucher heard part of the exchange, followed Allen out of the courtroom and saw him go

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# SUSPECT

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down the courthouse's central spiral staircase.

"We lost sight of him on the second floor," Blucher said.

Deputies locked down the building and found a man who looked like Allen sitting alone in a second-floor courtroom. They let him go because he was wearing a white T-shirt and not the blue-and-white dress shirt Allen had been wearing upstairs.

But when deputies saw him head toward the front door, they stopped him and identified him as Allen.

According to court records, Allen was convicted in 2001 of dealing narcotics and sentenced to 20 years in prison. He was released in 2007 and ordered to complete drug rehabilitation.

Kiessling said Allen tested positive for cocaine earlier this year, prompting his probation agent to seek the arrest warrant and ask that he be held pending a hearing.

Deputy Harry Neisser, spokesman for the department, said defendants rarely attempt to escape the courthouse. Deputies and attorneys yesterday could recall only one other serious escape attempt — more than eight years ago.

Zewan Montez Henriques, 22, of Annapolis, bolted from Silkworth's courtroom on March 9, 2001, after showing up to court late and learning there was a bench warrant out for his arrest. He ran from the courtroom, escaped the courthouse and ran into the Maryland Inn, also on Church Circle.

There, he found an Easter Bunny costume in a closet and tried to hide. It didn't work. Deputies ultimately cuffed him while he was wearing the costume and led him back to court.

"It's just something we have to do," Schwaab said of the search for Allen and his subsequent arrest. "We're ready to do it whenever it happens."

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