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Man guilty of 60 car break-ins

Judge orders 2-1/2 years in jail

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WORCESTER — A city man who broke into scores of motor vehicles in several area towns last year was sentenced to jail and placed on probation after pleading guilty yesterday.

Anthony F. Burns, 18, formerly of 43 Harlem St., was charged with breaking into about 60 motor vehicles from Nov. 9 to Nov. 27, 2007, in Dudley, Holden, Princeton and West Boylston, damaging some of the vehicles and stealing money, compact discs and other items.

Mr. Burns told investigators after his arrest that he acted with another person in some of the break-ins, but did not identify his accomplice, according to Assistant District Attorney Joseph A. Quinlan.

Mr. Burns was sentenced to 2-1/2 years in the House of Correction and placed on probation for 6 years after pleading guilty yesterday in Worcester Superior Court to 76 counts of breaking and entering in the nighttime with intent to commit a felony, six counts of larceny of property valued at more than \$250, eight counts of maliciously damaging a motor vehicle, three counts of tagging, and one count of vandalism.

The sentence imposed by Judge Peter W. Agnes Jr. was recommended by Mr. Quinlan and Mr. Burns' lawyer, Joseph M. Shields.

Filed without pleas or findings under the plea agreement were 43 counts of larceny of property valued at less than \$250, and single counts of entering without breaking and being a common and notorious thief.

Mr. Quinlan said Mr. Burns was believed to have been affiliated with a gang in the Vernon Hill section of the city and that a gang symbol was evident near the scene of some of the Dudley break-ins.

The prosecutor said Mr. Burns was charged with being part of a joint venture involving at least one other unknown individual. Evidence against Mr. Burns included admissions he made to investigators, a fingerprint found on a glove left behind at one of the crime scenes, and a photographic identification by a witness, Mr. Quinlan told the court.



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As one of several conditions of probation, Mr. Burns was ordered to pay restitution in an amount yet to be determined, but not to exceed \$20,000. A hearing to establish the amount of restitution was scheduled for Feb. 4.

Other conditions of probation require Mr. Burns to remain drug- and alcohol-free, to stay away from his victims and their homes, to possess no knives or other dangerous weapons, to make good-faith efforts to obtain a high school equivalency diploma and find employment or further his education, and to have his living arrangements approved in advance by the Probation Department.

Mr. Shields told Judge Agnes his client had a difficult childhood, but did well academically while under the auspices of the state Department of Youth Services. In urging the judge to adopt the recommended sentence, Mr. Shields said he believed Mr. Burns could become a productive member of society.

Judge Agnes said that although it was difficult to understand the motivation for Mr. Burns' crimes, he viewed the sentencing recommendation as appropriate, given Mr. Burns' age and lack of a serious criminal record.

Mr. Burns was given credit for 393 days he spent in custody awaiting trial.



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