



## Fugitive travels from Florida to Akron for program

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AKRON -- After running from the law for years, Robert Heim began walking, only this time he was heading towards police.

"Ever since I can remember, when I've been in trouble I've ran from it," he said. "I'm ready to turn myself in."

Two summers ago, Heim went to Florida on vacation and found himself in prison serving time for burglary.

"I got jammed in a hurricane and broke into a store to steal a bag of diapers and bag of baby formula," he explained.

Heim was completing his two year sentence when his mother sent him a newspaper article advertising the Fugitive Safe Surrender Program in Akron.

The four-day program allows offenders wanted on warrants to turn themselves in peacefully. They're granted an attorney and a court hearing in a more comfortable church setting at the House of the Lord.

"I had a DUI in Ohio that I never served time for so I asked the prison in Florida to get me a bus ticket to Ohio. Well, they messed up the ticket and sent me south deep into Florida. I got off the bus and realized I had no idea where I was. I was in the middle of no man's town," said Heim.

Stranded in Ocala, Florida with no money, Heim walked 150 miles to the nearest Western Union so a family member could wire him cash.

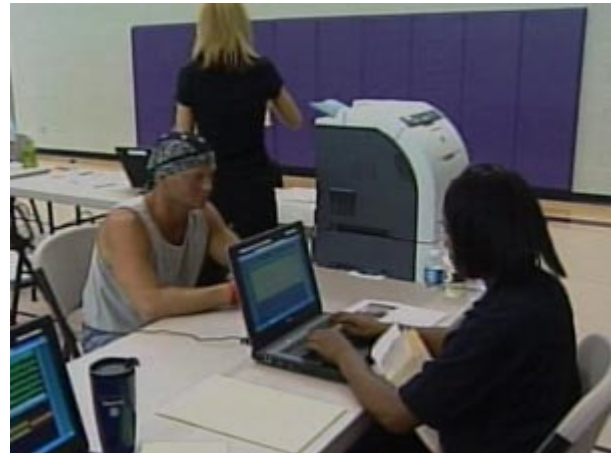
"I slept on a bench that night and I got on a bus the next day and I've been buying ticket to ticket all the way here," he said.

Helm arrived in Akron Tuesday night and immediately went straight to a hospital. Doctors bandaged up his feet with walking casts.

"The bottom of my feet are completely gone. There's no skin on the bottom and where there is, it's dead," he said.

Heim, like many other fugitives who surrendered in Akron, didn't want to miss this chance to clear his record once and for all.

"I know turning myself into police is something I've never been able to do. This makes it a little easier I didn't have to walk in with an officer and handcuffs on," he said.



Heim's original warrant was served in Medina County so he was told he'd have to visit Medina's court the following day. He was one among many fugitives with warrants in other counties who were disappointed they couldn't handle their cases immediately. However, officials cleared all of those defendants' warrants. The fugitives were also given official documents recording their attempts to take care of their cases.

"Medina County said they're gonna give Robert Heim the same type of consideration he would have here if this were his jurisdiction," said Peter J. Elliott, U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Ohio.

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