

Virgil Gets His Firewood Split

William walked into the Marshall City sheriff's office late last Fall and asked the desk sergeant if he could speak to the sheriff about a confidential matter. The sergeant said, "What's it about, William?"

"It's confidential, Mark. I need to talk to the sheriff privately. It's about my neighbor, Virgil. I don't want any rumors getting out about what I have to tell the sheriff."

"OK. Let me see if he's available," the sergeant replied. "I'll be right back. "

After conferring with the sheriff, the sergeant returned to the front desk and motioned for William to follow him back to the sheriff's office.

"Sheriff, this here's William Buckman. He says he needs to talk with you privately about his neighbor, Virgil, and doesn't want to start any rumors."

The sheriff motioned for William to come in and take a seat, and he closed the door behind him.

"Now what's this all about, William?" Are you having a problem with Virgil?"

"Well, I don't know, Sheriff. It's this way. Virgil and I've been good friends for many years, but I've been a little worried about him as he's gotten older. I think he may be having difficulty making ends meet. I think he just might be dabbling in something illegal to bring in some extra cash."

The sheriff said, "What do you think he's doing that might be "shady?"

"Well, he had a load of wood delivered to his house cut into rounds ready for splitting into firewood," William stated.

"What's so unusual about that?" the sheriff questioned.

"Well, Virgil usually gathers his own logs from the dead trees in the back of his farm, cuts it into rounds himself, and splits it within just a few days," William replied. Those rounds he had delivered have been sitting there for the past month.

That's just not like Virgil. Besides, I noticed the rounds are marked with blue paint and Virgil goes out to his woodpile and sort of picks over the wood in the evening like he's looking for something."

The sheriff looked at William skeptically and said, "What business is this of the sheriff's department? " Why are you telling me this? "

"I think Virgil has some marijuana hidden in his woodpile, sheriff. I think he goes out in the evening to retrieve some of it to sell for extra cash. I've heard that marijuana is being trucked into Missouri hidden in firewood. I think you need to send a couple of your deputies out to look for drugs in Virgil's firewood."

So, the next day the sheriff dispatched some deputies with axes to look for marijuana in Virgil's rounds of wood. The deputies split two cords of wood looking for marijuana, but they didn't find a single ounce.

The following Saturday, William called Virgil up on the phone and said, "Happy birthday, Virgil. I hope you liked my birthday present -- having your firewood split for you this winter!"

(Original story by Bill Vardiman)