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# Educators Get Prison Terms

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DURANGO, Colo. (AP) — A couple who worked as educators during the week and moonlighted as thieves on weekends were sentenced here Friday to five years' in prison.

Gene and Eve Whitlock of Gallup, N.M., stood with their hands shaking as District Court Judge James Childress read their sentences, but otherwise showed no emotion.

In a plea bargain on May 4, the couple pleaded guilty to two counts of theft, two counts of criminal trespass and possession of burglary tools. The couple was accused of stealing goods from cars at the Purgatory ski area on Jan. 28 and March 4.

Prosecutors said the couple also was believed to have committed thefts at La Plata County campgrounds and ski areas since 1981. Police found stolen property estimated to be worth \$75,000 at the Whitlocks' apartment in Gallup.

Gene Whitlock, 46, was a former assistant principal at Gallup High School, and Eve Whitlock, 44, formerly taught at St. Michaels School in Arizona. Prosecutors alleged that they worked as educators during the week — then took to the road to rifle cars and campgrounds on weekends.

"We are concerned that they're going to be (in prison) with people who don't have the same compassion they do," Scott Miller, the Whitlocks' lawyer, told the judge.

"They are professional people who have never committed a crime before. We hope their skills can be utilized, rather than having them housed in a maximum security cell where people who commit violent crimes are housed."

Childress told the couple, "I trust your confinement will be where you can utilize your talents."

The judge — who noted that the Whitlocks have no prior criminal records — said they may petition the court to have their criminal records sealed, if they complete seven years without a subsequent conviction once they have served their sentences.

The Whitlocks will be housed in the La Plata County Jail for two to six weeks before being moved to state prison facilities, District Attorney Mike Wallace said.

Wallace, unveiling burglary tools he said the Whitlocks used, argued hard for the maximum five-year penalty defined in the plea bargain.

"These people, with master's degrees, have incomes higher than most in our society," Wallace said. "They stole property valued in excess of what many people make in a lifetime."

## Discrimination