

'My shoe store was my everything' | Business owner closes after 5th burglary in 6 months

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LITTLE CANADA, Minn. — As a self-described "sneakerhead" from birth, Walter Dillon always knew running his own boutique shoe store was his dream

"Absolutely, it was a dream come true," he said.

Dillon said customers came from all over the state for his hard-to-find, sought-out sneakers.

"Just selling shoes and having people leave with smiles on their faces for rare and collectable shoes they couldn't get anywhere else, it was a blessing," said Dillon.

But Dillon's Little Canada store "KKG Kickz" is now shuttered after a series of break-ins.

Not once or twice, but five times in a six-month span, brazen burglars either pried open a door or smashed through a window and filled their bags with merchandise.

The fifth burglary, by far, cut the deepest.

"As my wife was getting ready to deliver, I got a call from my alarm system ADT, alerting me there was a break-in. I had to rush over here and assist the sheriffs. And I missed the birth of my son," Dillon said.

Walter missed the birth of his son Wesley, and soon after lost his insurance and his lease.

"I had so many claims that they just dropped me in the middle of a claim," Dillon said.

"This is heartbreaking. This is devastating. I don't sleep easy anymore. My shoe store was my everything," he said.

The main thing Dillon wants now is to raise awareness - both to pending retail theft legislation that he hopes can begin to curb these crimes and to communities that may not realize the depth of the problem.

"If we could let our neighbors know, our friends know, our community know, and we'd be one step above the guy doing all the harm, I think we could minimize it if not stop it completely," Dillon said.

The retail theft legislation - if it passes - would define "organized retail theft" as acts where the offender steals with the intention of re-selling the merchandise, then giving hefty penalties when convicted.

Online re-sale is what Walter Dillon believes was happening with the shoes stolen from his store.