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OFFICE OF THE
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STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Takedown of Large-Scale Organized Retail Theft Ring



Courtesy of the Office of the Attorney General

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced the arrest of seven individuals for their roles in a multi-county organized retail theft ring targeting beauty and fragrance products.

“This was a coordinated criminal enterprise that robbed retailers across Florida and turned stolen goods into illicit proceeds,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “We will continue working closely with our law enforcement partners to protect Florida businesses, keep prices low for consumers, and quickly dismantle organized retail theft rings from the ground up.”

“Organized retail theft is not just about stolen merchandise, it is about coordinated criminal activity that impacts families, small businesses, and our entire community,” **said Miami-Dade Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz**. “This investigation demonstrates the strength of our partnerships across jurisdictions and our shared commitment to holding those who engage in organized criminal enterprises accountable. In Miami-Dade County and throughout Florida, we will continue working with our state and local partners to identify these networks, disrupt their operations, and ensure they face the full consequences under the law.”

"This case sends a clear message that organized retail theft will not be tolerated in Martin County," **said Martin County Sheriff John Budensiek**. "These criminals weren't just stealing merchandise — they were targeting hardworking business owners and ultimately driving up costs for our residents. Through strong partnerships and coordinated statewide prosecution, we are holding these traveling criminals accountable and protecting our community from large-scale retail fraud."

"This arrest sends a clear message that organized retail theft, no matter how coordinated or far-reaching, will be aggressively investigated and prosecuted," **said Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw**. "Those who profit from stealing in our communities will be held accountable."

"Retail theft at all levels is a direct attack on our businesses and communities," **said Scott Shalley, President and CEO of the Florida Retail Federation**. "I am grateful to the Attorney General James Uthmeier, our law enforcement officers and prosecutors for their relentless pursuit of justice and fierce commitment to dismantle organized retail crime. We stand firmly with Florida's businesses, they deserve nothing less than full protection under the law."

"I am proud of what our Retail Theft Investigative Task Force has done to quickly deliver results that protect both Florida businesses and consumers," **said Statewide Prosecutor Brad McVay**. "Criminal enterprises don't worry about jurisdictional barriers, and now we don't have to, either. Trust that our statewide prosecutors are working hard to track down these professional thieves and lock them up."

The joint investigation led by the Office of Statewide Prosecution, the Martin County Sheriff's Office, the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office, and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office was carried out with assistance from the Palm Bay Police Department, the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, and the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office.

Investigators found that between November 2024 and the summer of 2025, this criminal organization contributed to tens of thousands of dollars in losses to retailers across the South, Central, and West Florida regions. The criminal ring targeted several CVS, Walgreens, Publix, Burlington, and Ulta Beauty locations.

The shoplifters, known as "boosters," traveled to retail stores to fill bags with health and beauty supplies. The boosters sold the stolen goods to Naychel Jerez, a Hialeah-based fence. Jerez resold the merchandise online, on platforms like OfferUp and Facebook Marketplace.

Search warrants executed at Jerez's residence recovered \$123,966 worth of stolen health and beauty merchandise, as well as anti-theft removal devices, a cash counting machine, and over \$51,000 in cash.

The defendants are in custody at the Martin County Jail with the following charges:

- **Naychel Alvarez Jerez, 36**
 - Conspiracy to commit racketeering
 - Directing dealing in stolen property
 - Conspiracy to commit dealing in stolen property

- Unlawful use of a two-way communications device
- **John Kevin Romero, 22**
 - Conspiracy to commit racketeering
 - Organized retail theft (two counts)
 - Dealing in stolen property
 - Conspiracy to commit dealing in stolen property
 - Unlawful use of a two-way communications device
- **Josue Rego Romero, 29**
 - Conspiracy to commit racketeering
 - Organized retail theft (two counts)
 - Dealing in stolen property
 - Conspiracy to commit dealing in stolen property
 - Unlawful use of a two-way communications device
- **Albert Mario Socorro Alvarez, 28**
 - Conspiracy to commit racketeering
 - Organized retail theft (two counts)
 - Dealing in stolen property
 - Conspiracy to commit dealing in stolen property
 - Unlawful use of a two-way communications device
- **Jose Carlos Perez Salgado, 30**
 - Conspiracy to commit racketeering
 - Organized retail theft
 - Dealing in stolen property
 - Conspiracy to commit dealing in stolen property
- **Antonio Perez Torres, 26**
 - Conspiracy to commit racketeering
 - Organized retail theft
 - Dealing in stolen property
 - Conspiracy to commit dealing in stolen property
- **Lissette Rodriguez, 34**
 - Conspiracy to commit dealing in stolen property
 - Unlawful use of a two-way communications device

In 2024, Governor DeSantis signed HB 549, which increased the penalties for Organized Retail Theft and made certain repeat offenders eligible for 30 years in prison. Some of the defendants in this case are looking at a maximum sentence of 80 years in the Florida Department of Corrections.

This case will be prosecuted by Assistant Statewide Prosecutors Chris Olowin and Monique Wilson in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

Law enforcement agencies interested in joining the Organized Retail Theft Special Investigative Task Force can contact the Office of Statewide Prosecution by emailing retailtaskforce@myfloridalegal.com.

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