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Collaborative Efforts Result in Major Takedown of Vast Organized Retail Crime Operation

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Today the CHP, California Department of Justice, and allied federal agencies announced the takedown of a vast organized retail theft operation spanning 21 counties and involving \$8 million worth of stolen beauty products.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Attorney General Rob Bonta, and federal law enforcement agencies today announced the arrest and filing of charges against the ringleader of an extensive organized retail crime operation spanning 21 counties, involving an estimated \$8 million in stolen beauty products. The announcement signals the culmination of several months of collaborative investigatory efforts in the CHP's ongoing fight against retail crime.

The investigation was conducted by the California Department of Justice (DOJ), CHP, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Postal Inspection Service along with Ulta's Loss Prevention Organized Retail Crime team and Sephora Representatives. It is alleged that the ringleader of the scheme paid more than seven people to steal from Ulta Beauty stores, as well as other retail outlets. The ringleader would then sell the stolen cosmetic items on her Amazon storefront.

WHAT CHP COMMISSIONER SEAN DURYEE SAID: "The success of this investigation is due to the collaboration between several of our Organized Retail Crime Task Force teams throughout the state, the CHP's Computer Crimes Investigation Unit, the DOJ, our federal partners, and retailers. Through increased collaborative efforts, retailers and law enforcement have become more efficient and effective in our fight against organized retail crime."

Recognizing the complexity and scale of the operation, in August 2023, federal investigators requested the CHP's Organized Retail Crime Task Force (ORCTF) join their ongoing investigation. In December, simultaneous search warrants were executed by ORCTF investigators in Southern California and the suspects were taken into custody.

The charges, brought by the California DOJ, include Organized Retail Theft, Conspiracy, Receipt of Stolen Property, and multiple counts of Grand Theft

The thefts occurred in Alameda, Placer, Kern, Contra Costa, Orange, Los Angeles, Santa Clara, San Diego, Sacramento, San Mateo, Solano, Riverside, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Napa, Marin, Tulare, San Bernardino, Sonoma, Ventura, and Yolo counties.

Since the inception of the ORCTF in 2019, the CHP has been involved in more than 2,300 investigations leading to the arrest of more than 2,200 suspects and the recovery of over 761,000 stolen goods valued at \$41.7 million.

If you witness one of these crimes occurring, do not attempt to intervene – call 9-1-1. Members of the public and retailers can also [report retail crime tips](#) directly through the CHP's website.

The CHP's mission to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security.



Images courtesy of the CHP



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