



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2024

CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

RIDGEWOOD BOUTIQUE RAIDED IN FENCING OPERATION;
DEFENDANT ARRESTED FOR POSSESSING STOLEN MERCHANDISE

Goods Taken from Major Retailers, Sold at Steep Discounts

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced the recovery of more than \$500,000 in stolen items from Macy's, Victoria's Secret, Lululemon and other major retailers that were openly displayed and re-sold at less than half their retail value inside the McKlain Collection Boutique in Ridgewood. A defendant is charged with criminal possession of stolen property for allegedly running the fencing operation.

Queens District Attorney Katz said: "Organized retail crime is fueled by fencing operations that siphon money from legitimate retailers for their own financial gain. The merchandise recovered as part of this raid was allegedly stolen from retail stores across the country by sophisticated teams of thieves who divert profits into their own pockets. Organized retail theft affects everyone through increased prices for consumers, lower sales, and fewer jobs. Through meticulous investigations like these, and by utilizing our [Queens Merchant Business Improvement Program](#), I am committed to addressing the welfare of our local economy that keeps this borough thriving."

NYPD Commissioner Edward A. Caban said: "Organized retail theft imposes a considerable economic burden on entire communities, including local businesses and the hardworking New Yorkers who patronize them. I commend our NYPD investigators for recovering the stolen goods in this case, as well as for their tireless, ongoing efforts to identify and hold accountable anyone involved in such illicit operations."

Juan Nunez, 56, of 81st Street in Lindenwood, was arraigned May 3 on a charge of criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree.

The defendant faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted. Queens Criminal Court Judge Julietta Lozano ordered him to return to court July 3.

According to the investigation and charges:

- In March and April, members of the Organized Theft Squad, under the NYPD's Financial Crimes Task Force, and the Queens District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau conducted an investigation into the sale of stolen merchandise from various brand-name retailers, which ultimately led them to the location operated by the defendant.

- On May 3, based on the intelligence gathered, law enforcement officials executed a court-authorized search warrant at the McKlain Collection Boutique at 813 Seneca Avenue that resulted in the recovery of numerous clothing items stocked on the store's shelves, walls, drawers and racks as follows:
 - o 5,035 items including clothing, fragrances, cosmetics and other merchandise belonging to Macy's, valued at approximately \$333,000.
 - o 600 items including men's and women's clothing from Lululemon, valued at approximately \$71,000.
 - o 2,123 items including undergarments and pajamas from Victoria's Secret, valued at approximately \$59,000.
 - o 521 clothing items from Abercrombie & Fitch, valued at approximately \$25,000.
 - o 460 clothing items from American Eagle, valued at approximately \$17,000.
- The stolen goods were identified by retail investigators as originating from stores in New York, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, as well as other states, and were generally sold for cash at approximately 50 percent below their retail value. Many of the original price tags were still clearly visible at the time of the raid.
- Tools used for the removal of security tags were also observed at the location, though there were no security tag sensors at the location.

The investigation was conducted by members of the Organized Theft Squad, under the NYPD's Financial Crimes Task Force, with lead investigators Detective Vincent Catalano and Detective Anthony Yeh, under the supervision of Sergeant Matthew Doherty, Lieutenant Joseph Dellauniversita, and Inspector Igor Pinkhasov.

Assistant District Attorney Richard Martin of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, Catherine Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, and Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard A. Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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