

Cops: From Arizona To New York, Thieves Turn Legos Into Hard Cash
News

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(CNN) - From Arizona to New York, alleged thieves are turning those tiny iconic plastic interlocking bricks you grew up with into cold, hard cash.



On New York's Long Island on Friday, a 53-year-old woman was arraigned on grand larceny charges for allegedly stealing about \$60,000 worth of Lego sets and trying to sell them on eBay, the Nassau County Police Department said in a statement.

Gloria Haas was arrested Thursday after allegedly stealing 800 sets of the 80-year-old toys from a Long Island storage facility and moving them to a facility in another town, police said. She had intended to sell the toys on eBay, officials said.

It was not known whether Haas has an attorney and she was not immediately available for comment Saturday.

Authorities are not saying, but alleged thieves could be capitalizing on the enduring popularity of the simple little bricks which generated \$1.1 billion in profits last year for the Danish toymaker.

"The Lego Movie," which was released in February, made \$69 million in its opening weekend and has grossed more than \$250 million so far, according to Box Office Mojo.

In Phoenix, police arrested four people allegedly involved in an elaborate Lego theft scheme, according to CNN affiliate KPHO.

After the arrests, police spent 10 hours Friday loading onto trucks more than \$250,000 worth of Lego sets stored in a garage, KPHO reported.

At least \$40,000 worth of the Legos are believed to have been stolen, CNN Phoenix affiliate KNXV reported.

"It's hard to believe that two or three people could be taking that much product out of the store, and yet they were," officer James Holmes told KNXV.

A real estate professional, another man and two women were arrested in connection with the scheme, according to KHPO. It was not clear Saturday whether they had attorneys.

Police said one man bought expensive Lego sets at a discount from shoplifters and resold them online. Each of the play sets taken were valued at \$100 or more, police said.

The suspect allegedly recruited accomplices to go to Toys R Us stores to steal Lego sets, KPHO reported.

The boxes in which the toys came would be damaged and turned over to the online seller, who would return to the store and buy a new set, the station reported.

The online seller later allegedly used the real receipt for the purchase to return the damaged box

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<http://www.kttn.com/kgofm/modules/news/article.php?storyid=113262>

set. He pocketed the money and sold the stolen Lego sets online to collectors, KPHO reported.

The suspects were arrested on charges that include organized retail theft, trafficking in stolen property, fraudulent schemes and illegal control of an enterprise, police said.