



Phoenix Police Department
Public Affairs Bureau
620 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85003



MEDIA ADVISORY

Organized Retail Crime Roundup

DATE: Thursday, July 10, 2025
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
EVENT: Organized Retail Crime Roundup
WHO: Phoenix Police Department
LOCATION: Phoenix Police Headquarters
620 West Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85009
SPEAKERS: Assistant Chief Ed DeCastro, PPD
Sergeant Sean Clark, PPD
Detective Mark Holtzen #8696, PPD
Detective Jacob Kellander #8981, PPD
County Attorney Rachel Mitchell, MCAO

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FAqDgP7HnrIkOfQAHBTvBBdkR422D-HX?usp=sharing>

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The Phoenix Police Department has successfully dismantled a sophisticated organized retail theft operation, resulting in the arrest and indictment of three individuals responsible for stealing and reselling merchandise worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. This extensive investigation, led by the Property Crimes Bureau's Organized Retail Crimes Detail, highlights the collaborative efforts of various law enforcement units to combat complex criminal enterprises.

In 2023 and 2024, detectives from the Organized Retail Crimes Detail identified a crew responsible for stealing over \$160,000 in merchandise, primarily from Bath & Body Works locations, across Phoenix and Maricopa County. This crew was also linked to similar crimes in Texas and Nevada.

The investigation led to a husband and wife, Nephtali Santiago-Garcia and Yuli "Nissy" Degante-Vigueras, at the center of the illicit operation. The couple was identified as the primary "fence," purchasing large volumes of stolen goods from the theft crew and reselling them for profit. Their Glendale home featured a converted living room acting as a storefront where they often sold the

stolen merchandise through online platforms. The investigation determined they trafficked in stolen property on at least seventeen separate occasions between April 2023 and April 2024.

Further investigation led to the identification of Marcos Ortega Hernandez, a delivery driver who supplied the married couple with substantial volumes of stolen merchandise that he was supposed to deliver to retailers. Hernandez worked for a trucking company delivering to major retailers like Bath & Body Works, Old Navy, Victoria's Secret, Gap, and Banana Republic. He diverted an estimated \$200,000 worth of cargo for illegal resale. Between 2023 and 2024, Hernandez received over \$72,000 in payments from the couple for these illicit transactions.

On April 9, 2025, Nephtali Santiago-Garcia and Yuli Esther Degante Vigueras were arrested. A search warrant executed at their Glendale home led to the recovery of over \$355,000 worth of new Bath & Body Works merchandise and approximately \$5,000 in new Victoria's Secret merchandise. Many items were still in their original parcels with shipping labels, which directly implicated Hernandez, as over \$20,000 worth of the recovered merchandise was traced back to his delivery trucks.

Following extensive additional investigation, Marcos Ortega Hernandez was arrested on June 26, 2025. A search warrant at his residence uncovered additional new and stolen merchandise from various victim retailers. As a result of the overall investigation, the following individuals have been arrested and indicted on the following charges:

· **Marcos Ortega Hernandez:**

MCSO Booking number - G188576

1 Count of Fraudulent Schemes / 1 Count of Trafficking in Stolen Property

· **Yuli Esther Degante Vigueras:**

MCSO Booking number – G171020

1 Count of Theft / 1 Count of Fraudulent Schemes / 1 Count of Illegal Control of an Enterprise / 7 Counts of Trafficking in Stolen Property

· **Nephtali Santiago-Garcia:**

MCSO Booking number – G171068

1 Count of Theft / 1 Count of Fraudulent Schemes / 1 Count of Illegal Control of an Enterprise / 17 Counts of Trafficking in Stolen Property

*Sergeant Lorraine Fernandez
Public Affairs Bureau*