

For Immediate Release

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Suspects Arrested for Trafficking Stolen Property Partnership between police and local retailers nets organized retail thieves

Yesterday morning Renton police seized more than 200 cans of baby formula destined for the black market of Vietnam, following a year-long investigation. The formula, valued at about \$5,400 is back in the hands of Safeway and QFC, just two of the many retailers targeted by thieves in recent months. The suspect, Nguyen Tran Nguyen, has been booked for Felony Investigation of Attempted Trafficking in Stolen Property 1st Degree.

Utilizing undercover officers investigators contacted a couple, Whitney Dale-Benson and Christopher Gannon, who offered to sell investigators several cans of stolen baby formula. The investigators developed a relationship with the couple, known thieves in the area of Organized Retail Theft, who stole thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise during the course of this investigation. The relationship led to the identification of Nguyen as the person who had previously purchased their stolen goods.

During a five month period in 2014, Nguyen purchased from investigators more than \$26,000 in what she believed to be stolen merchandise. She told investigators that she shipped the stolen baby formula to "her sister in Vietnam."

Nguyen, who is being held at the SCORE jail, was convicted in 2009 in federal court for Use of a Communication Facility in Aid of Racketeering in a federal investigation of brothels disguised as tanning salons and spas. Benson and Gannon were arrested yesterday afternoon and booked into jail for Attempted Trafficking of Stolen Property 1st Degree.

"Organized Retail Crime is a growing issue for retailers and for law enforcement. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with Safeway and QFC; without their assistance this case would not have come to fruition," said Chief Kevin Milosevich.

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