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Attorney General Ashley Moody News Release

AG Moody's Statewide Prosecutors Charge Members of Organized Retail Theft Ring for Committing More Than 35 Thefts in South Florida



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution is charging three members of an organized crime ring with multiple felony counts for stealing from retailers in South Florida. According to a Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office investigation, Ariel McFarlane, Lequentin Butler and Eddy Etienne committed more than 35 thefts in Palm Beach and Broward counties in a four-month period. The group targeted major retailers and stole items from laundry detergent to fragrances and expensive clothing.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "All the laundry detergent and perfume in the state of Florida couldn't cover up the stench of guilt emanating from these organized retail thieves. They committed more than 35 thefts from multiple retailers in South Florida, stealing more than \$15,000 worth of laundry detergent, fragrances and expensive clothing. Now, my statewide prosecutors will make sure they pay for this four-month crime spree spanning multiple counties."

According to the investigation, between January and April, McFarlane, Butler and Etienne committed more than 35 thefts from retail and department stores in South Florida. The group stole laundry detergent, laundry products, fragrances and expensive clothing from stores including CVS, Walgreens, Publix, Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's. After completing the thefts, the group posted the stolen goods for sale online through McFarlane's Facebook Marketplace

page and Instagram. The trio then delivered the stolen products to customers in Palm Beach and Broward counties in McFarlane's vehicle.

Each of the three defendants are charged with conspiracy to commit racketeering, organized retail theft and unlawful use of two-way communications devices. McFarlane and Butler are also charged with dealing in stolen property. Additionally, Etienne is charged with grand theft.

Etienne is currently in the country on a green card and is still at large.

Attorney General Moody's Assistant Statewide Prosecutors Chris Olowin and Kristin Howe will handle the case.

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