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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General Moody's Statewide Prosecutors Charge Man for Defrauding Amazon for More Than \$40,000



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Statewide Prosecutors are charging a man for a fraudulent scheme that stole more than \$40,000 from Amazon. Florida Department of Law Enforcement agents arrested Wail Chouder for conducting a fraudulent return scheme buying high-end merchandise and returning lesser-value products. Chouder then received credits and kept the original products.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Organized retail theft preys on businesses and harms our consumers. This lawlessness will not be tolerated in Florida, and thanks to FDLE and my Statewide Prosecutors, a thief stealing more than \$40,000 is arrested and his fraudulent return scheme is out of business."

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Mark Glass said, "Retail fraud hurts all consumers. When these greedy criminals commit fraud against a business, they also make Florida's hard-working citizens victims, too. I commend the exceptional work conducted by FDLE's agents and analysts and Attorney General Ashley Moody's prosecutors."

The FDLE investigation began in May 2022 when Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution contacted the FDLE Gainesville field office with a criminal complaint from Amazon. The retailer identified a customer that engaged in fraud involving merchandise theft through a systematic pattern of return abuse. The total loss to the business was \$40,395 for 27 fraudulent returns between May 2019 and May 2022.

The investigation revealed that in the fraudulent scheme, Chouder purchased high-value products, including electronics, sporting goods and luxury eyewear. After receiving the merchandise, Chouder requested return packing slips and then sent back lesser-value substitute products in place of the original merchandise. For the returns, Chouder received a credit in the amount of the initial purchase to the purchasing credit card, account on file or retailer gift card, and illegally kept the high-value merchandise. If Amazon refused a refund, Chouder filed chargeback claims with various credit card issuers by requesting the retailer to reimburse the credit card issuers for the fraudulent returns. Chouder committed the crimes in Alachua and Orange counties.

Chouder is charged with organized scheme to defraud \$20,000 or more but less than \$50,000.

The case will be prosecuted by Attorney General Moody's OSP.

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