



# A Report on Organized Retail Theft

Researched and written by:  
Charles I. Miller, CPP, CSP  
Food Industry Network  
P.O. Box 1515  
Great Falls, VA 22066

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## **Foreword**

This document was prepared to provide local, state and federal legislators and prosecutors, the judiciary, and law enforcement agencies without previous experience in dealing with organized retail theft, a better understanding of retailing's major criminal problem today – professional shoplifting or organized retail theft.

We urge all who read this report to join our efforts to prevent the loss of billions of dollars worth of products and many millions of dollars in tax revenue.

### **Coalition Against Organized Retail Theft**

Consumer Healthcare Products Association

Eastman Kodak Company

Food Marketing Institute

GlaxoSmithKline

Grocery Manufacturers of America

International Mass Retail Association

International Formula Council

National Association of Chain Drug Stores

National Association of Convenience Stores

National Community Pharmacists Association

National Retail Federation

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

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Janet Scott  
Investigative Task Force,  
Legislative Team Leader  
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.  
Bentonville, AR

Steve King  
Corporate Director of Claims  
The Kroger Co.  
Cincinnati, OH

Kathleen Smith  
Vice President, Corporate Security  
Safeway Inc.  
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Mark Levenberg  
Assistant District Attorney  
District Attorney's Office  
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Security Manager  
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Louisville, KY

Frank Muscato  
Investigative Task Force,  
Legislative Team Leader  
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.  
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Art Wulfeck  
Risk Manager  
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## **Definitions of Words and Terms Used in this Report**

### **Organized Retail Theft (ORT)**

Organized retail theft is theft from retail stores by professional shoplifters. Such theft is labeled organized theft because it is carried out, for the most part, by professional shoplifters who work for criminal organizations that operate under a set of well-planned procedures and rules. The merchandise stolen by ORT rings is purchased by fences who sell the products to repackers, illegitimate wholesalers, and flea market vendors.

### **Professional Shoplifter/Booster/Sweeper**

A person who shoplifts for money, perhaps as his/her sole source of income, is a professional shoplifter sometimes called a booster or a sweeper.

### **Sweeper**

A professional shoplifter is often referred to as a sweeper. The term describes the method the shoplifter uses when he/she clears an entire shelf of a targeted product, e.g., sweeps clean.

### **Street Fence**

A street fence buys directly from professional shoplifters paying them either in cash or drugs. A street fence is often the owner of a retail or discount store, or the operator of a flea market stand. The street fence usually buys stolen goods from 15 to 30 boosters. The fence trains the boosters, informs them as to the products to steal, and tells them what stores to hit. The street fence also acts as an enforcer, when needed.

### **Upper-Level Fence**

The upper-level fence operates at a "higher level" than a street fence. The upper-level fence generally does not buy directly from boosters. He/she will deal in thefts of full loads of stolen cargo, illegally diverted goods, and goods acquired through credit card scams, "bust out" deals or heists and hijacks. The market for the upper-level fence is usually a repack operation or illegitimate wholesaler.

### **Repackaging Operation**

A repackaging operation usually operates as a wholesale distributor. Repackagers will buy stolen goods from upper level fences and directly from professional cargo thieves from a number of states. Repackers sort, clean, shrink wrap and repack stolen merchandise to make the goods appear like they were purchased from a manufacturer. Repackers usually have counterfeit manufacturer shipping cartons and have the ability to produce counterfeit UPC codes. Repackers usually sell to illegitimate wholesalers.

### **Illegitimate Wholesaler**

The illegitimate wholesalers are often referred to as product "diverters." They sell to retailers at prices below the manufacturer's list price. These companies operate in the "grey market" and secondary wholesale markets to move stolen products back into the legitimate

retail market. They will mix legitimate products with stolen products and even produce counterfeit products to make tracking the illegitimate products very difficult.

### **Investigative Task Force**

An investigative task force is generally composed of federal, state, county and local law enforcement agencies, and security executives from victimized retailers and manufacturers. Law enforcement from several states, counties and cities may participate. Federal and/or state prosecutors are usually aware of such multi-agency task forces. Security executives from retail and manufacturing concerns will assist in tracking losses, surveillance, providing marked products for buy/busts and in other ways as the need arises.

# Organized Retail Theft

## Background

Organized retail theft (ORT) is a growing problem throughout the United States, affecting a wide-range of retail establishments, including supermarkets, chain drug stores, independent pharmacies, mass merchandisers, convenience stores, and discount operations. It has become the most pressing security problem confronting retailers. ORT losses are estimated by some security professionals to run as high as \$15 billion annually. ORT crime is separate and distinct from petty shoplifting in that it involves professional theft rings that move quickly from community to community and across state lines to steal large amounts of merchandise that is then repackaged and sold back into the marketplace. Petty shoplifting, as defined, is limited to items stolen for personal use or consumption.

## Targeted Products

ORT rings typically target everyday household commodities and consumer items that can be easily sold through fencing operations, flea markets, swap meets and shady store-front operations. Items that are in high demand by these professional theft rings include over-the-counter (OTC) products such as analgesics and cough and cold medications, razor blades, camera film, batteries, videos, DVDs, smoking cessation products, and infant formula.

## Consumer Health and Safety Risks

Consumers are at risk when ORT gangs steal consumable products, especially OTC items and infant formula. In many cases after the merchandise has been stolen, the products are not kept under ideal or required storage conditions, which can result in rapid ingredient deterioration and loss of potency. If the products are near the end of their expiration date, ORT middlemen will change the expiration date and lot numbers to falsely extend the shelf-life of the product. In addition, cough and cold products are popular with ORT rings because these medications can be sold to clandestine labs for the purpose of manufacturing methamphetamine.

## Economic Impact on Consumers

Retail theft often results in consumers having to pay higher prices for the products they purchase as retail establishments attempt to cover their losses. Higher prices adversely affect all consumers, especially the most needy in America, such as the elderly and families that depend upon food stamps and the WIC program to augment their limited budgets.

Consumers are also being inconvenienced by this type of criminal activity. Because theft has become so rampant in certain product categories, such as infant formula, a number of major retail companies are taking the products off the shelves and placing them behind the counter

or under lock and key. In some cases, products are simply unavailable due to high pilferage rates.

### **Tax Loss is Enormous**

The Retail Alliance, an organization serving retailers in the Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake, and Hampton Roads communities in Virginia, estimates that retailers in these communities suffered \$200 million of loss to shoplifters in 2001. Tax loss to Virginia amounted to \$9 million; \$5 million of that loss would have gone into the state budget and \$4 million to local cities and schools. Organized retail theft is a crime that has spread to all reaches of the U.S. The tax loss nationally is hundreds of millions of dollars.

### **Reasons Why Organized Retail Theft has Flourished**

Professional shoplifters steal huge amounts of products that are relatively expensive and can be easily sold to dishonest wholesalers, retailers and flea market operators. The thieves are often drug addicts or ex-convicts who know that the penalties for shoplifting are not serious. In fact, most shoplifters do not spend any time in jail and pay only small fines, if they pay a fine at all.

The availability of targeted products, the relatively high income possible through shoplifting for a fence, low expectation of prosecution, and small risk of doing jail time, provide all the incentives professional shoplifters need. The fences and corrupt dealers in stolen merchandise know where to find and recruit their boosters. A single organized retail theft ring may operate in a number of states. The corrupt wholesaler or dealer that pays for shoplifted merchandise often buys full trailer loads of stolen merchandise. Full loads of merchandise may be stolen from truck stops, truck terminals, or hijacked hundreds of miles distant from the dishonest wholesaler's place of business.

As with the crime of shoplifting, there is small risk of apprehension for professional cargo thieves. The FBI has greatly reduced the number of Special Agents assigned to investigating cargo thefts. The National Cargo Security Council estimates cargo theft losses to exceed \$10 billion per year and growing.

### **Federal Statute Needed to Combat ORT**

Food Marketing Institute and the Coalition Against Organized Retail Theft fully support the proposed Bill: *Organized Retail Theft Act of 2003*. A copy of the proposed Bill is included in the Appendix of this report. Information on the recent history of professional shoplifting and fencing of stolen products, now known as organized retail theft, is also found in this report.



## History of Organized Retail Theft

Thieves have stolen retailers' merchandise for all of recorded history. But organized retail theft as we know it today became apparent just over fifteen years ago. Shoplifter rings were discovered and investigated in Detroit, Pittsburgh, and other Eastern U.S. cities in the mid-1980s. ORT proliferated in the 1990s and continues to grow today, but a new and potentially dangerous element has entered the ORT scene. There are strong indications that revenue from these criminal enterprises may be funneled to terrorist groups or to those here in America who support terrorist rings. Leaders of at least three large ORT rings that have been broken by long-term investigations were foreign nationals, some with U.S. citizenships, and many who are illegal immigrants. These three ORT rings are discussed later in this report.

### The Organized Retail Theft Ring

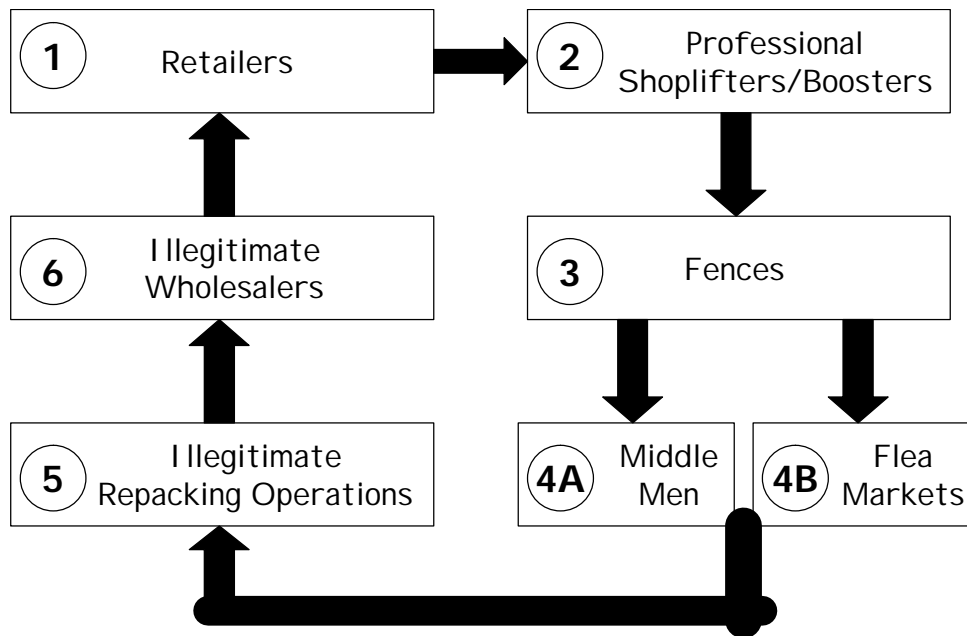


Chart Note: Merchandise stolen by professional shoplifters, or BOOSTERS, is usually sold to FENCES, or low-level buyers. Then it often goes to FLEA MARKETS for sale directly to the public, or to upper-level fences, or MIDDLEMEN. Middlemen often send their stolen goods to REPACKAGING OPERATIONS, where store stickers are removed and expiration dates sometimes changed. The repackaged goods are then sold to ILLEGITIMATE WHOLESALERS, who mingle the stolen products with legitimate merchandise and sell them back to retailers – possibly the same ones ripped off in the first place. Source: Liam Collins, *The Virginian Pilot*

### Organized Retail Theft: Threat to Retailers and to America

Shoplifting is still considered a victimless nuisance crime by many courts and legislative bodies; a crime not harmful to citizens and one that many believe can easily be offset by retail sales and profits. But shoplifting must be considered as a high-loss two-tier crime, widespread and growing. Petty shoplifting in the lower tier is a crime mostly in the misdemeanor category,

that occurs many thousands of times each day. In food retailing, the common shoplifting incident results in a loss of \$36.85<sup>1</sup> to the retailer. The total of these losses is, of course, very high.

The second tier of shoplifting is far more costly to the retailer, presenting risk of harm to store personnel and customers and substantial loss of tax revenue to local, state and federal governments. The second more costly tier of shoplifting is committed by professional thieves and the crime they commit is organized retail theft – professional shoplifting. One must not mistake this crime as petty, ordinary shoplifting; it is an organized criminal enterprise.

Professional shoplifting can be divided into three levels of criminal activity:

**Low-level:** Professional shoplifters either work alone or with one or two accomplices. Generally, professional shoplifters at this level are drug addicts who steal only enough merchandise to pay for the drugs needed for the day. Thieves at this level will sell their stolen merchandise daily to a street fence or a dishonest retailer(s) for 20% to 30% of retail value. The value of merchandise stolen by an individual at this level ranges from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per day, generating from \$200 to \$600 cash for the thief.

**Mid-level:** The mid-level shoplifting ring may include from five to twenty-five or more professional shoplifters who are recruited, trained and supervised by street fences. The fences will decide the stores to hit and the type, brand and quantity of each product needed. Fences often distribute a list of products to remind their boosters of the products they should steal (see Exhibit A). These ORT rings operate on a strict set of rules. If a booster attempts to skim products or cheat the fence in any way, provide law enforcement too much information if he/she is questioned, or doesn't follow the methods for stealing while in a store, he/she may be physically harmed by the fence. Boosters who work in these highly-structured rings have annual incomes over \$100,000.

The fence may be the owner of a small discount store or he/she may operate a flea market stand. Some, perhaps most street fences, will devote all of their time to their ring of boosters and to "cleaning" the stolen merchandise. The cleaning process involves removing retail price tags, electronic article surveillance tags, and any other product identification tags. Fingernail polish remover and razor blades are commonly used to clean merchandise. Counterfeit UPC code labels are often applied to the products so the shelf-life dates are extended to make the products appear "fresher."

Stolen products are sorted into two categories. Products with short expiration dates or are damaged, are set aside to be sold to flea market vendors, liquidators or discounters. The saleable or perfect products are boxed, shrink-wrapped, and sold to upper level fences, or directly to repackers that generally operate large-scale criminal enterprises dealing in stolen merchandise. These organizations have warehouses that appear much like legitimate

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<sup>1</sup> Food Marketing Institute 2002 Security & Loss Prevention Issues Survey.

distributors. Some fences ship their stolen merchandise to repackers out of state via UPS or FedEx or by motor vehicles driven by members of his ring.

***Top-level:*** The top-level organized retail theft operations can be divided into two types of illegal enterprises. One is the repackaging operation, and the other is the illegitimate wholesaler. A repackaging operation usually operates as a wholesale distribution business front. Repackaging operations are usually located in major metropolitan areas where they easily blend in with other legitimate wholesale businesses. Repackaging operators will purchase stolen property from upper-level fences from many different states. When the stolen merchandise arrives, it is sorted by product, again cleaned as necessary, shrink-wrapped and boxed to make products appear that they were purchased from a manufacturer. The sophisticated repackers often have the ability to duplicate manufacturer logos and UPCs on cases to allow mass shipping. The goods are then sold to an illegitimate wholesaler.

The illegitimate wholesaler (see United Trading Co. on page 7) is usually a large corporate entity which sells to retailers domestically and in some case, internationally. To conceal the illegal nature of their operations, these companies purchase goods legitimately from manufacturers, close outs and insurance sales. The legitimate products are mixed in with stolen and counterfeit products. Full trailer loads of stolen merchandise are often mixed with legitimate products. Generally, stolen cargo does not need to be cleaned so the cargo can be entered into the retail system quickly.

Several illegitimate wholesaler operations have been defeated by the work of an investigative task force comprised of victim retailer security executives, product manufacturer security personnel, the FBI and state, county and local law enforcement agencies. Investigations usually run for two to three years before sufficient information and evidence are gathered to arrest and convict the operators and their fences and foot soldiers.

### **Recent Major Investigations of Organized Retail Theft Organizations**

The cases briefly described below are typical organized retail theft investigations. These cases have been selected for this report because they show that professional shoplifting rings operate in all regions of the U.S. It is impractical for this writer to attempt to estimate the amount of tax revenues lost, the loss to retailers, or the cost to investigate these crimes.

<b>January 2003 West Chester Township, Ohio</b>	<b>Yemen Native Charged With Violations of Immigration Laws and Receiving/Distributing Stolen Property</b>
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This case is currently under investigation by federal authorities as this report is being written. Only the information included in newspaper accounts is included below. The central figure in this case, a Yemen native, is suspected of using aliases and trying to move large amounts of cash and people under suspicious circumstances. The subject is held without bond because of allegations he tried to bring 25 Yemeni men into the United States for "improper reasons."

Federal agents previously seized \$784,000 from his home in a Dayton suburb. The money was packed into resealed shampoo boxes. He has since been the target of federal investigations since 1999. The subject is also under federal indictment in California, accused of participating in a conspiracy to distribute an over-the-counter drug used in illegal labs. He was free on \$400,000 bond until his latest arrest.

A federal warrant also accused the subject of transporting stolen merchandise in interstate commerce. Authorities said they found stolen baby food loaded aboard a stolen trailer at the subject's warehouse in West Chester, Ohio. He was held without bond on federal charges involving stolen Gerber baby food products found at his warehouse on December 30, 2002. Four out-of-state suspects have also been charged in this alleged theft. The stolen trailers found at the warehouse held 4,000 cases of Gerber baby food, cereal and baked goods. The trailer load was stolen in Marshall County, Mississippi, on December 27, 2002.

During the December 30, 2002 raid at the warehouse, local and federal agents noticed large quantities of Enfamil and Similac infant formula at the warehouse. Officers also spotted several machines used to shrink-wrap product cases, a stamping machine that imprinted the words, "use by this date," a quantity of rubbing alcohol, and new boxes apparently being used to package the infant formula.

Federal law enforcement agents staged a second raid at the warehouse on January 13, 2003. Investigators found about 100 pallets of infant formula, in addition to the case stamping apparatus and counterfeit boxes, shrink-wrap machines, and rubbing alcohol, commonly used to remove prices from products.

Federal authorities are continuing their investigation, as it now appears the subject was receiving stolen infant formula, extending the "sell by" dates, repacking the stolen merchandise, and then redistributing the products.

**December 2002  
Portland, Oregon**

**Retail Security Investigators and Law Enforcement  
Break Large Theft Ring**

Following an 18-month investigation that was prompted by an alert Safeway Inc. security investigator, the FBI, Portland, Oregon, police, and Clackamas County, Oregon, Sheriff's Department arrested and charged five people on federal felony charges, including interstate transportation of stolen property, conspiracy, receiving stolen property, and money laundering. Two of the persons charged reside in Vancouver, two others live in the Portland, Oregon, area, and one person has a Davie, Florida, address.

The size of the organized retail theft ring was not known when this report was written, but law enforcement officials believe the ring was large and populated by drug addicts who are professional shoplifters. More than 25 suspects have been identified and additional arrests are expected. Some of the merchandise stolen from grocery retailers, drug store operators and department stores in a large region of the Northwest was sold to Happy Deal, a store

owned and operated by two of the suspects, Ninh Van Vuong and his wife, Thao Phuong Vuong. The brother of Mr. Vuong, Khung Van Vuong, was also arrested on the same charges.

Llan Amar of Davie, Florida, was charged with receiving approximately 14,276 pounds of stolen products at his facility, SMP Wholesale, in Florida. Amar allegedly repackaged and sold the merchandise as overstocked products. The estimated value of the merchandise is \$1.3 million, received from April to December 2002. The annual loss to retailers in Oregon from this ORT ring is estimated to be upwards of \$15 million. Law enforcement and retail security agents said the professional shoplifters stole over-the-counter pharmaceuticals, razor blades, film, batteries, health and beauty aids, pain relievers, diabetic test kits, hair-growth products, smoking cessation aids, CDs and DVDs.

In February 2001, a Safeway store detective learned from a shoplifter apprehended in a Safeway store that the shoplifter had a ready market for the large quantities of merchandise he stole. Further interviews, surveillance, and investigation enabled Safeway Inc. security staff to refer the case to the Clackamas County Sheriff's Department in June 2001, who immediately initiated an undercover operation. After establishing that a large portion of merchandise was being shipped and sold to an illegitimate wholesaler in Florida, SMP Wholesale, the case was turned over to the FBI in February 2001 for further assistance. Security personnel at Albertson's, Inc., were also involved in the investigation of this large organized retail theft ring. This is a classic example of the way private retail security professionals and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies can work together to fight organized retail theft in the United States.

**September 2002**

**United Trading Co./Unity Wholesale Co.**

**Lexington, Kentucky**

United Trading Co. and Unity Wholesale Co., headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky, are owned and operated by Mohammed Said Shalash and his sons, Tareq and Ziyah Shalash, a Jordanian family with ties to the Middle East. On September 6, 2002, the Shalash brothers were found guilty on twenty counts of racketeering, money laundering, interstate transportation of stolen property, and conspiracy. Mohammed Said Shalash fled the U.S. in the Spring of 2001 and reportedly died in Palestine on November 7, 2001.

Unity Wholesale Co. bought and sold goods acquired from major cargo thefts and professional shoplifter rings. Stolen products arrived the Shalash distribution center in Lexington, Kentucky, from at least 16 states, including California, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Kentucky.

Informants testified that the Shalash family bought stolen trailer loads of Motrin, Tide, Huggies diapers, Enfamil infant formula, Kellogg cereal, Gillette razors, Noxema, Nyquil, and other products, including Viagra and various toiletries. Professional shoplifters supplied the Shalash organization with health and beauty care products, vitamins, films, batteries, CDs, and other merchandise.



residency cards in the raid. Eight Colombia Nationals were arrested in Danville, Illinois, a few days prior to the Hammocks/Miami raid. Several of the suspects arrested in Danville, Illinois, were identified through some of the IDs in the Hammocks apartment. Law enforcement believe the twelve suspects are only a part of a large ring of professional shoplifters. No further information is available as this case is still under investigation.

**March 2001**

**The Washabaugh Family Theft Ring**

**Lexington, Kentucky**

The Washabaugh family organized retail theft ring stole millions of dollars of merchandise over a twenty-year period. Tim Washabaugh, family patriarch and head thief, described the activities of his illegal enterprise in an interview at the U.S. Postal Inspector's Office in Lexington, Kentucky. Washabaugh is currently serving a six year sentence in a federal penitentiary but agreed to talk with authorities in exchange for a lighter prison sentence.

The Washabaugh family theft ring stole almost exclusively from Wal-Mart. Family members studied Wal-Mart store designs, and security practices and CCTV coverages in the stores. They knew the work schedules of store supervision and security personnel. Washabaugh said his group would steal mostly electronics and non-prescription drugs. Washabaugh's daughter, Mitzi, would plan each trip so the group could hit as many Wal-Mart stores as possible in a typical four-day journey, without having to backtrack to a store. The Washabaugh ring would hit several Wal-Mart stores in a single day, operating in teams of five people. The ring sold to dishonest retailers and flea market vendors. They shipped stolen merchandise via UPS regularly to fences out of state. The ring operated throughout the Southeast and Mid-West.

**June 2000**

**Organized Retail Theft Ring Shipped**

**Phoenix, Arizona**

**\$10 Million of Loot to New York**

Twenty-two people were indicted in Phoenix, Arizona, for operating an organized retail theft ring that stole more than \$10 million of health and beauty care products and then shipped the merchandise to Brooklyn, New York, for resale.

Leaders of the ring were charged with 24 counts of conspiracy, interstate transportation of stolen property, conspiracy to money launder and money laundering. The merchandise was stolen primarily from stores in Arizona and California.

Professional shoplifters would operate in teams of two or more. The thieves were given a list of products to steal by their fence each day. The boosters were paid 10% to 15% of the retail value of the merchandise they stole, in cash every day. The ring operated in the Phoenix area, Tucson, and the Los Angeles area. The clean-up operations, where security tags and store markers were removed, were located in Los Angeles and Phoenix. Several store fronts were established to conceal the clean-up operations and to launder money.

**October 1999**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

**Operation American Dream**  
**Pakistani Organized Retail Theft Ring**

In the mid-1990s, a Pakistani criminal enterprise ran a large-scale fencing/repackaging business in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The targets were stores located in and on the outskirts of Atlanta. You name it, these thieves stole it. Over-the-counter medicines, pharmaceuticals, razors, and all types of health and beauty aids from retail stores. Computers, DVDs, stereos, TVs, clothing, shoes, even jet skis and household goods disappeared from the shelves of nationally-recognized retail stores.

The activities of this criminal group, however, did not go unnoticed. As far back as 1997, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) conducted a six-month investigation of the Pakistani shoplifters before raiding the operation and shutting it down. But within a few weeks, the culprits simply regrouped and were back in business. At that time, investigators for the Dayton Hudson Corporation (DHC), owners of nationally known retail stores like Target, began to investigate the group. They discovered that its operation expanded far beyond Atlanta. It was then, in October 1998, that DHC contacted the FBI's Atlanta office.

Both agencies – along with the Atlanta Police Department, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Internal Revenue Service – joined forces and initiated “Operation American Dream.” Over the next year, investigators learned that the Atlanta fencing operation was conspiring with other foreign nationals in Baltimore, two cities in New York, and in Pakistan, to fence and repackage millions of dollars worth of stolen merchandise. In addition to fencing stolen items, this group was also involved in money laundering, illegal alien smuggling, auto theft, interstate transportation of stolen goods, and attempted murder.

The modus operandi of the criminal enterprise operating out of the Atlanta area was comprised of thirty predominately illegal Pakistani nationals who had also committed crimes in at least three states. The leaders of the enterprise, who operated convenience stores that were receiving the stolen merchandise, recruited a group of over 200 professional shoplifters. They also recruited illegal Pakistani immigrants with promises of a better life in America and plenty of money to send home to their families in Pakistan.

The shoplifters would steal from retail stores and travel to small towns where store security, in most cases, was minimal. They would usually operate in groups of four or five, often using distraction techniques to steal merchandise. The group leaders supported the efforts of their boosters by providing them with vehicles and by posting bond for them if they were arrested. On a good day, they could steal fifty to one hundred thousand dollars worth of merchandise. The stolen merchandise would later be taken to a warehouse where it was repackaged and shipped to co-conspirators in New York, Baltimore, and Pakistan. Subjects in New York and Baltimore would sell the stolen merchandise to wholesale companies who would often resell the merchandise to retail stores. Some of the stolen merchandise was also sold in the Atlanta area to businesses that would, in turn, put the merchandise in their stores and sell it to their customers.



Interestingly, competition to buy the stolen merchandise from the shoplifters was intense. In one instance, a group member was so enraged by another member who bought more merchandise and made more money, that he hired a couple of thugs to rough-up a clerk who helped operate his rival's store. The clerk was severely beaten and shot.

Then there was merchandise skimming. Some group members would keep the better, more costly shoplifted items for themselves instead of turning the merchandise in to the leader of the group. This created a shortage in the take and caused fights among group members. This enterprising crime group was not afraid of the police, and for good reason – at least two Atlanta police officers were being paid to assist the group. The officers would provide security during illegal operations and transactions, and warn the group of impending police action.

So why not just deport the criminals? It wasn't that easy. In one instance, several members of the group paid \$35,000 to have another member smuggled back into the United States after he was deported for shooting a police officer.

While members of the Pakistani criminal enterprise were haggling amongst themselves, Operation American Dream was hard at work trying to shut the operation down. The year-long investigation produced cooperating witnesses and positive identification on all participants – including the illegal alien immigrants who were using false identifications.

On October 14, 1999, a 214-count indictment was issued in Atlanta charging twenty-nine subjects in this matter with multiple counts of conspiracy, money laundering, and interstate transportation of stolen property. On October 26, 1999, Operation American Dream culminated in forty-one federal arrests, forty-five local arrests, the seizure of approximately \$450,000 plus five luxury vehicles, and the recovery of approximately \$1.6 million in stolen retail merchandise. One Atlanta police officer was arrested and convicted, while another chose to resign and was likely to be indicted at a later date. In addition to the arrest and search operations in Atlanta, investigative support was provided by the Baltimore, Los Angeles, and New York offices of the FBI, which resulted in one arrest in California, four arrests in New York, and three arrests in Maryland.

*Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation*

**May 1999  
Portland, Maine**

**Leaders of Organized Retail Theft Ring  
Charged with Operating Three-State  
Criminal Enterprise**

After an eight-month investigation, federal authorities charged three men with conspiracy to transport stolen goods, theft, and income tax evasion. The individuals operated an organized retail theft ring that stole health and beauty care items, film, batteries, videos, vitamins, and other non-foods from retail stores in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

The stolen merchandise was sold to a dishonest supermarket operator who bought the goods from two street fences, who are charged in the case. The individuals were found guilty in subsequent trials and were sentenced to 3 to 5 year terms plus orders for restitution to victimized retailers. All three were on "supervised release" programs for previous crimes.

**Spring 1996  
Raleigh, North Carolina**

**Operation Travelers Leads to Arrests of  
Twenty-Five Individuals in Organized  
Retail Theft Ring**

This case drew a lot of attention during trial. Investigations revealed the modus operandi of a large organized retail theft ring that operated in the Carolinas and other southeastern states. Stolen merchandise was shipped to illicit wholesalers in New York and sold to a number of flea market vendors, probably in North Carolina.

The methods the ring leaders used in operating this organized retail theft ring were much the same found in other similar cases up until this day. Information gathered in the investigation assisted retail security professionals and law enforcement agents in subsequent organized retail theft investigations.

There is little readily available information about this case. However, more than twenty individuals were either convicted or pled guilty. Retail losses were several million dollars.

## **Action Steps for Retailers and Law Enforcement**

An organized retail theft ring can not be brought to justice by a single police department, company security department, FBI office, or by any other single entity. The discovery of an organized criminal ring may well result from the work of a single retail loss prevention investigator or police officer, but experience clearly shows that the investigation of the theft ring will require local, state, and Federal law enforcement agencies, and security professionals from victimized retailers to work together in a union of mutual trust and cooperation. Such investigations may run for two years or more.

Retail security professionals should advise law enforcement when they discover information that indicates a professional ring of thieves may be operating in an area. Such information may be revealed in interviews of shoplifters, or may be indicated on CCTV recordings of one or more people stealing large quantities of targeted products. Retailers should also be particularly aware of organized retail theft when shrink figures for cosmetics, over-the-counter drugs, pain relievers, films, batteries, vitamins, etc., consistently are above expectations. Shrink figures at 15% to 40% for a single product or groups of similar products often indicates an organized retail theft ring is working the area.

Law enforcement should advise retailers when they discover a retailer's products in crack houses, or in the possession of a fence. Law enforcement should not hesitate to ask retail security professionals for assistance in investigating theft rings, cargo thefts, or other types of major crimes. Retailer security professionals have assisted law enforcement many times by providing products for buy/bust programs, and by assisting in gathering intelligence on persons wanted for questioning. Retailers have often checked their databases for names and addresses of shoplifters apprehended, worthless check writers, and for information on shopper loyalty cards to assist law enforcement investigations.

### **Shoplifter Interviews**

Professional shoplifters have provided information a number of times that was useful in investigating organized retail theft rings. Retail loss prevention investigators should be aware of the products most frequently stolen by professional shoplifters. When a shoplifter is apprehended in possession of a quantity of targeted products, e.g., razors, CDs, infant formula, pain relievers, etc., it is recommended that the Shoplifter Interview Form (see Exhibit B) be used when interviewing the suspect.

If information is gathered during the interview that indicates the suspect works for a fence and/or for a theft ring, the investigator can:

- Make changes in company security measures to make the stores tougher targets;
- Discuss the information with detectives and/or FBI special agents assigned to investigating retail theft/money laundering;

- Share the information with security professionals at other retail firms in the area; and
- Use Wazagua's free web-based case incident management tools to analyze and collect shoplifter data, and participate in FMI's organized retail theft project by sharing these data (see FMI's website at [www.fmi.org/partners](http://www.fmi.org/partners) for more information on Wazagua's free tools). FMI's objectives are to determine the types of products targeted by professional thieves, the losses incurred, as well as the geographical regions where the losses are occurring. Armed with these important data, we will be able to advise law enforcement and legislatures on the enormous losses incurred by retailers from organized retail theft, as well as propose important revisions to the criminal statutes that will better serve retailers (see Exhibit C).

### **Identifying Products Confiscated from Theft Rings/Illegitimate Distributors**

Law enforcement usually has difficulty in determining ownership of products confiscated from fences, illegitimate distributors and repackers. Unless the retailers have placed labels on their products to identify their products and to discourage shoplifters, it is difficult to determine who owns the product. UPC codes do not usually reveal product ownership.

Law enforcement and/or the prosecutor should promptly advise the major supermarket, drug store and discounter companies in the area of the products they have impounded. The companies may be able to identify at least some of their products. Obviously, the products will have to remain with law enforcement as evidence. Retailers have often assisted law enforcement by taking inventory of products confiscated in actions against suspected thieves.

### **What Lies Ahead**

Organized retail theft is flourishing in America. Organized retail theft rings often operate several years before they are discovered, investigated and brought to justice. Many of the ORT rings are led by immigrants; some are legal, many are not.

There are investigations of ORT rings and money laundering underway on this date in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia, New Jersey, Oregon, Ohio and Florida. There are very likely other investigations underway as well. There are certainly ORT rings operating in every region of the United States.

### **Legislative Action Necessary**

Organized retail theft, which often involves money laundering, will only be reduced and controlled by enacting Federal legislation to make professional shoplifting a federal felony offense. Such legislation will assist the FBI, and federal prosecutors in bringing the ORT leaders and their foot soldiers to justice.

FMI's draft bill making organized retail theft a federal crime is attached at Exhibit C. The draft creates a new section in the robbery and burglary chapter of title 18 of the U.S. Code prohibiting organized retail theft. The crime covers the theft of specified values of "retail property" wherever it is located, within any 180-day period. Organized retail theft is made a predicate for a RI CO claim, which automatically becomes an unlawful activity under the money laundering statute. The bill provides for seizure and forfeiture and restitution. It also provides for civil damages, includes flea market provisions, and calls for an annual report by the attorney general. Any questions on the proposed Bill, *Organized Retail Theft Act of 2003* (see Exhibit C), should be directed to Ty Kelley, FMI's director of government relations, at 202-220-0629.

FMI will provide a complimentary copy of its videotape, *Thieves Market*, to any law enforcement agency, or state or Federal legislator upon request. Please contact MaryAnn House, FMI's director of loss prevention services, at 202-220-0772. The 13-minute video will educate management, law enforcement and state legislative committees about the enormous problem of organized shoplifting gangs or professional thieves. It discusses the types of merchandise they steal, the billions of dollars of loss incurred annually by retailers, and how the criminal organization works – from the booster, to a fence, then to a repacker and re-distributor. Also discussed is how these criminals work, why they choose one particular store over another, and what types of security equipment and procedures deter them.

We encourage retail security professionals, law enforcement, and prosecutors to work together to protect our retail industry and our economy against organized retail theft.

# Exhibit A: Shoplifter Worksheet

The following is an actual copy of a list of products needed for that particular day given to a professional shoplifter by his street fence. The prices listed are the amounts the shoplifter will be paid per package for a particular item. Note the business hours for the location where the stolen merchandise will be fenced. Similar lists have been recovered from professional shoplifters a number of times across the United States.

QTY	ITEM/DESCRIPTION	PRICE	REMARKS
	Advil 8 ct. (yellow or blue)	25¢	(Closed ON Sunday)
	Advil 24 ct. (yellow or blue)	50¢	
	Advil 50 ct. (yellow or blue)	\$1.25	
	Advil 100 ct. (yellow or blue)	\$2.00	
	Advil 165 ct. (yellow or blue)	\$3.00	OPEN
	Advil 250 ct. (yellow or blue)	\$3.50	Monday
	Advil Cold or Sinus - 24 ct.	\$1.00	Thurs
	Advil Cold or Sinus - 50 ct.	\$1.25	
	Airin - 24 ct.	50¢	
	Anacin - 24 ct.	<del>1.00</del>	Saturday
	Anacin - 50 ct. and 60 ct.	1.50	
	Anacin - 100 ct.	<del>2.00</del> 3.00	1:00 P.M.
	Anacin - 200 ct.	3.00	
	Anacin - 300 ct.	50¢	TI
	Bayer - 24 ct.	75¢	
	Bayer - 50 ct.	1.50	9:00 PM
	Bayer - 100 ct.	2.00	
	Bayer - 200 ct.	2.00	
	Bayer - 300 ct.	2.00	
	****NO BAYER SELECT****		
	BC Powders - 24 ct.	25¢	Closed
	BC Powders - 50 ct.	75¢	
	Benedryl - 24 ct.	75¢	ON
	Bronkaid - 1/2 oz. kit	1.50	
	Bronkaid - 1/2 oz. refill	1.50	Sunday
	Bronkaid - 3/4 oz. refill	2.00	
	Bronkaid - 24 ct. tab.	50¢	
	Bronkaid - 60 ct. tab.	6.00	
	Bufferin - 24 ct.	25¢	
	Bufferin - 50 ct.	1.00	
	Bufferin - 100 ct.	1.50	
	Bufferin - 200 ct.	2.00	
	Chemstrip - 25 ct.	3.00	NABCO
	Chemstrip - 50 ct.	6.00	CAT
	Chemstrip - 100 ct.	12.00	THURS
	****RED BOX BLUE METER ONLY****		
	Clear Blue Easy - 1 test	3.00	
	Clear Blue Easy - 2 test	3.50	
	Culeco - 30 ct.	1.00	
	Culeco - 60 ct.	1.50	
	Contrax - 24 ct.	1.00	

Contact - 10 ct.	50¢
Contact - 20 ct.	1.00
Correctol - 15 ct.	50¢
Correctol - 30 ct.	75¢
Correctol - 60 ct.	1.50
Correctol - 90 ct.	2.00
****NO BLUE STOOL SOFTNER****	
DayQuil - 12 ct.	75¢
DayQuil - 20 ct.	1.00
Dimetapp - 12 ct.	75¢
Dimetapp - 20 ct.	1.00
Doan's Pills - 24 ct.	75¢
Doxidan - 50 ct.	1.50
Doxidan - 100 ct.	2.00
Drixalen - 20 ct.	75¢
Drixoral - 10 ct, 12 ct, 24 ct.	1.00
Dulcolax - 8 ct.	25¢
Dulcolax - 16 ct.	50¢
Dulcolax - 25 ct.	50¢
Dulcolax - 50 ct.	1.00
Dulcolax - 100 ct.	1.50
Duracell - 9 volt (1 pk.)	25¢
Duracell - 9 volt (2 pk.)	75¢
Duracell - AA and AAA (2 pk.)	25¢
Duracell - AA and AAA (4 pk.)	50¢
Duracell - AA and AAA (8 pk.)	1.00
Duracell - C and D (2 pk.)	50¢
Duracell - C and D (4 pk.)	1.00
Ecotrin - 60 ct. and 100 ct.	1.00
Ecotrin - 150 ct. and 250 ct.	2.00
Excedrin - 24 ct.	50¢
Excedrin - 50 ct.	1.00
Excedrin - 100 ct.	1.50
Excedrin - 150 ct. and 175 ct.	2.00
Excedrin - 200 ct. and 275 ct.	2.50
E.P.T. - 1 test	3.00
E.P.T. - 2 test	3.50
Fact Plus - 1 test	2.00
Fact Plus - 2 test	2.50
Fem Care	2.00

# Exhibit B: Shoplifter Interview Form



## THE QUESTIONER for Gathering Shoplifting Intelligence

The key to cracking suspected organized retail theft cases that impact your company on a larger scale is by gathering intelligence. Try using the ten key questions below to guide a conversation instead of an interrogation.

1. Is this the first time you have been here and why did you come here today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Is it easy to shoplift in our store? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
If yes, why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Besides this type of merchandise, what other merchandise have you taken? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you going to keep this merchandise or will you sell it (if the merchandise was to be sold, ask how much he/she would receive for it)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What types of merchandise are other people, perhaps your friends, stealing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Who buys shoplifted merchandise? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you shoplift and sell directly to a business or to an individual? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Where are these people or businesses located? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Do other people who shoplift sell to these same people? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
10. How many shoplifters work for the person to whom you sell stolen merchandise? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### TIPS:

- Please keep in mind that there are no threats or promises made during the conversation.
- Do not use interrogation; use conversation and the shoplifter is more apt to talk.
- Please remember, these questions are a template. Try to change them to fit into a conversation that flows easily. The goal is to get as much intelligence as possible without making the shoplifter feel as if he/she is being interrogated.
- This is a fact-gathering conversation. Work at it and fine-tune it to your style of communication. It will improve with practice.
- If you feel the information is of value and will have impact on your company, contact your corporate security department and local law enforcement.

### General Comments:

- i. What did you learn from this interview? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ii. What steps should you take based on the information you have gathered? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- iii. Results (This section may be completed weeks or months after the interview, depending on the extent of the criminal activity discovered.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## **Exhibit C: Draft "Organized Retail Theft Act of 2003"**

### **A BILL**

To amend title 18, United States Code to combat, deter and punish individuals and enterprises engaged in organized retail theft.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled,*

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Organized Retail Theft Act of 2003."

### **SECTION 2. PROHIBITION AGAINST ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT.**

(a) IN GENERAL- Chapter 103, Title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new Section:

#### **SECTION 2120. ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT**

(a) Whoever in any material way or degree obstructs, delays or affects commerce or the movement of any article or commodity in commerce, by taking possession of, carrying away, or transferring or causing to be carried away, with intent to steal, any goods offered for retail sale with a total value exceeding \$5,000, within any 180 day period, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both;

(b) Whoever in any material way or degree obstructs, delays or affects commerce or the movement of any article or commodity in commerce, by taking possession of, carrying away, or transferring or causing to be carried away, with intent to steal, any goods offered for retail sale with a total value exceeding \$1,000, but not exceeding \$5,000, during any 180 day period shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(c) Whoever receives, possesses, conceals, stores, barter, sells, disposes of, or travels in interstate or foreign commerce, with the intent to distribute, any property which the person knows, or should know has been taken or stolen in violation of subsection (a) or (b), or who travels in interstate or foreign commerce, with the intent to distribute the proceeds of goods which the person knows or should know to be the proceeds of an offense described on subsection (a) or (b), or to otherwise knowingly promote, manage, carry on or facilitate an offense described in subsection (a) or (b), shall be fined or imprisoned as provided in subsection (a) or (b).

(d) Whoever, in committing, or in attempting to commit, any offense defined in subsections (a) and (b) of this section, assaults any person, or puts in jeopardy the life of any person by the use of a dangerous weapon or device, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty-five years, or both.

(e) Whoever, in committing any offense defined in this section, or in avoiding or attempting to avoid apprehension for the commission of such offense, or in freeing himself or attempting to free himself from arrest or confinement for such offense, kills any person, or forces any person to accompany him without the consent of such person, shall be imprisoned not less than ten years, or if death results shall be punished by death or life imprisonment.

(f) As used in this section "value" has the meaning given that term in 18 U.S.C. sec. 2311.

**SECTION 3. COMMISSION OF ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT A PREDICATE FOR RICO CLAIM**

Section 1961(1) of title 18 United States Code, is amended by adding "section 2120 (relating to organized retail theft)" at the end.

**SECTION 4. FORFEITURE AND DISPOSITION OF GOODS** (a) Whoever violates any provision of section 2120 of this chapter shall forfeit to the United States, irrespective of any provision of State law -

(1) any interest in the retail goods the person knows or should know to have been acquired or maintained in violation of section 2120.

"(b) INJUNCTIONS AND IMPOUNDING, FORFEITURE, AND DISPOSITION OF GOODS.—

"(1) INJUNCTIONS AND IMPOUNDING.—In any prosecution under this section, upon motion of the United States, the court may -

"(A) grant one or more temporary, preliminary, or permanent injunctions on such terms as the court determines to be reasonable to prevent or restrain the alleged violation; and

"(B) at any time during the proceedings, order the impounding on such terms as the court determines to be reasonable, of any good that the court has reasonable cause to believe was involved in the violation.

"(2) FORFEITURE AND DISPOSITION OF GOODS. - Upon conviction of any person of a violation under this section, the court shall -

"(A) order the forfeiture of any good involved in the violation or that has been impounded under paragraph (1)(B); and

"(B) either -

"(i) order the disposal of the good by delivery to such Federal, State, or local government agencies as, in the opinion of the court, have a need for such good, or by gift to such charitable or nonprofit institutions as, in the opinion of the court, have a need for such good, if such disposition would not otherwise be in violation of law and if the manufacturer consents to such disposition, or

"(ii) order the return of any goods seized or impounded under paragraph (1)(B); to their rightful owner.

"(C) find that the owner of the goods seized or impounded under paragraph (1)(B) aided in the investigation and order that such owner be reimbursed for the expenses associated with that aid.

For purposes of remission and mitigation of goods forfeited to the Government, the provisions of section 981(d) of this title shall apply."

(3) CRIMINAL FORFEITURE.—Section 982(a)(5) of title 18, United States Code, is amended -

(4) in subparagraph (D) by striking "or" after the semicolon;

(5) in subparagraph (E) by adding "or" after the semicolon; and

(6) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following:

"(F) Section 2120 (organized retail theft).

**SECTION 5. CIVIL REMEDIES** "(1) IN GENERAL. - Any person injured by a violation of this section, or who demonstrates the likelihood of such injury, may bring a civil action in an

appropriate United States district court against the alleged violator. The complaint shall set forth in detail the manner and form of the alleged violation.

“(2) INJUNCTIONS AND IMPOUNDING AND DISPOSITION OF GOODS.—In any action under paragraph (1), the court may –

“(A) grant one or more temporary, preliminary, or permanent injunctions upon the posting of a bond at least equal to the value of the goods affected and on such terms as the court determines to be reasonable to prevent or restrain the violation;

“(B) at any time while the action is pending, order the impounding upon the posting of a bond at least equal to the value of the goods affected and, on such terms as the court determines to be reasonable, if the court has reasonable cause to believe the goods were involved in the violation; and

“(C) as part of a final judgment or decree, in the court’s discretion-

“(i) order the restitution of any good involved in the violation or that has been impounded under subparagraph (B); or

“(3) DAMAGES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), in any action under paragraph (1), the plaintiff shall be entitled to recover the actual damages suffered by the plaintiff as a result of the violation, and any profits of the violator that are attributable to the violation and are not taken into account in computing the actual damages. In establishing the violator’s profits, the plaintiff shall be required to present proof only of the violator’s sales, and the violator shall be required to prove all elements of cost or deduction claimed.

“(4) COSTS AND ATTORNEY’S FEES.—In any action under paragraph (1), in addition to any damages recovered under paragraph (3), the court in its discretion may award the prevailing party its costs in the action and its reasonable attorney’s fees.

“(5) REPEAT VIOLATIONS. –

“(A) TREBLE DAMAGES. – In any case in which a person violates this section within 3 years after the date on which a final judgment was entered against that person for a previous violation of this section, the court may, in its discretion, in an action brought under this subsection, increase the award of damages for the later violation to not more than 3 times the amount that would otherwise be awarded under paragraph (3), as the court considers appropriate.

“(B) BURDEN OF PROOF.—A plaintiff that seeks damages described in subparagraph (A) shall bear the burden of proving the existence of the earlier violation.

**SECTION 6. FLEA MARKETS** “(1) PROHIBITIONS.—No person at a flea market shall sell, offer for sale, or knowingly permit the sale of any of the following products:

“(A) Baby food, infant formula, or similar products used as a sole or major source of nutrition, manufactured and packaged for sale for consumption primarily by children under 3 years of age.

“(B) Any drug, food for special dietary use, cosmetic, or device, as such terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and regulations issued under that Act.

“(2) EXCLUSION.—Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a person from engaging in activity otherwise prohibited by paragraph (1), in the case of a product described in paragraph (1)(B),

if that person maintains for public inspection written documentation identifying the person as an authorized representative of the manufacturer or distributor of that product.

“(3) FLEA MARKET DEFINED.— (A) As used in this subsection, the term ‘flea market’ means any physical location, other than a permanent retail store, at which space is rented or otherwise made available to others for the conduct of business as transient or limited vendors.

“(A) For purposes of subparagraph (A), transient or limited vendors shall not include those persons who sell by sample or catalog for future delivery to the purchaser.

“(4) CRIMINAL PENALTIES.—Any person who willfully violates this section shall be punished as provided in section 2120 of title 18.

**SECTION 7. ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS** Beginning with the first year after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Attorney General shall include in the report of the Attorney General to Congress on the business of the Department of Justice prepared pursuant to section 522 of title 28, an accounting, on a district by district basis, of the following with respect to all actions taken by the Department of Justice that involve organized retail theft (as defined in section 2120 of title 18), including:

(1) The number of open investigations.

(2) The number of cases referred by the United States Customs Service.

(3) The number of cases referred by other agencies or sources.

(4) The number and outcome, including settlements, sentences, recoveries, and penalties, of all prosecutions brought under section of title 18.

## **SECTION 8. CONFORMING AMENDMENT**

The Table of Sections for Chapter 103 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting at the end:

2120. Organized Retail Theft.

## CHARLES I. MILLER, CPP, CSP

Mr. Charles I. (Chuck) Miller recently retired as vice president of Food Marketing Institute's Loss Prevention Services Department, a post he held for 15 years. He was responsible for coordinating the Institute's initiatives pertaining to loss prevention in supermarkets and warehouses including customer and employee safety, fire prevention, disaster and damage control, product tampering, security, crisis management, insurance and substance abuse. He also developed FMI's regulatory compliance programs relating to loss prevention, hazardous substances and other areas. Since retiring, Chuck serves as a food industry consultant to various companies, including FMI and the National Food Processors Association (NFPA).

Prior to joining FMI, Miller was president and owner of Loss Prevention Systems, Inc., a management consulting firm he founded in 1970. His firm's services included loss prevention seminars, designing and implementing security and safety programs, conducting security and loss prevention surveys and internal investigations for management, and training management and supervisory personnel in loss prevention principles.

Earlier in his career, he served as manager of loss prevention for The Kroger Co., and as director of security and training for The Tappan Company.

Mr. Miller has authored numerous loss prevention articles for national, retail and wholesale trade magazines, as well as many books and manuals. His monthly publication, *Loss Prevention Letter for Supermarket Executives*, was published and distributed by FMI throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. He is listed in the *Directory of Consulting Specialists* and holds professional membership in the American Society of Safety Engineers, American Society of Industrial Security, and the National Fire Protection Association.