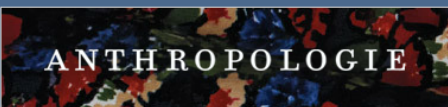


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By Susanna Kim  
@skimm

Dec 7, 2012 6:00am

### Thieves Eye Luxury Goods During Holiday Season

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Shoppers are not the only ones looking for things to buy during the holiday season; thieves are on the hunt too. Police say people are out to re-sell luxury stolen goods or to enjoy them for personal use.

Early Thursday morning in Chicago, police said three male suspects forced their way into a Jimmy Choo store and got away with an unknown amount of shoes and handbags in a four-door vehicle.

Chicago police said they were dispatched to a “burglary in process” at a Jimmy Choo store on Oak Street at about 1:45 a.m. Central Time. Officer Jose Estrada said a witness apparently called police.

Jimmy Choo did not return a request for comment.

Chicago's central detectives unit is investigating, Estrada said.

Joshua Bamfield, director of the United Kingdom's Centre for Retail Research, said robbers may eye luxury stores for the high prices their products can yield online or on the black market. Jimmy Choo shoes may retail for several thousand dollars. Choo's Kendall pump, embellished with crystals, is listed for \$2,995 on the company's website.

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“It's drifting toward Christmas and people are buying things for themselves and others,” Bamfield said. “As far as criminals are concerned, they can steal them for themselves or steal to re-sell to others.”

The National Retail Federation said that holiday sales represented 19.5 percent of total retail industry sales for 2011.

Thomas Martin, president of Martin Investigative Services, a private and corporate investigation firm headquartered in Newport Beach, Calif., said many retail thefts involve a person who works for or is affiliated with the company.

One luxury retail client approached Martin because it was missing almost \$2 million in products over six months. After interviewing the retail employees and failing to find any potential suspects, Martin set up a surveillance camera outside the store. Footage showed security guards were leaving products at a drop-off spot for a partner to pick up.

Martin said companies are concerned with anyone stealing products, money or time, such as employees being paid for time they did not work.

“When people start stealing product rather than time or money, that

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exacerbates the bottom line," he said.

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Thieves Eye Luxury Goods  
During Holiday Season

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