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“LEGO THIEF” INDICTED ON FEDERAL MAIL & WIRE FRAUD CHARGES

RENO - - A former Reno resident was indicted by the Federal Grand Jury today for allegedly stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars of “Lego” merchandise from various retail stores and selling it on the Internet, announced Daniel G. Bogden, United States Attorney for the District of Nevada.

William A. Swanberg, age 41, currently a resident of Hillsboro, Oregon, is charged with six counts of Mail Fraud and six counts of Wire Fraud. If convicted, he faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each count.

According to the Indictment, from June 1, 2005, to November 16, 2005, while Swanberg was residing at 2095 Brisbane Avenue in Reno, he allegedly prepared counterfeit sales bar codes (known as UPC codes) for Lego merchandise. Swanberg visited various retail stores, such as Target, Toys-R-Us, and Wal-Mart, in Texas, Oregon, California, Arizona, and Utah, and placed the counterfeit bar code label over the legitimate bar code label on the Lego merchandise. Swanberg then purchased the Lego merchandise for much less than the legitimately-listed price.

Swanberg listed the stolen Lego products for sale on the internet auction site “eBay” and the Internet webpages, “www.bricklink.com” and “www.barteringthebrick.com,” and failed to

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disclose to the customers that the merchandise had been stolen. After Swanberg sold the merchandise, he mailed it to customers in various states, and received payment via the “PayPal” Internet business which allows the electronic transfer of money between email users and merchants.

Using this scheme, Swanberg allegedly stole thousands of boxes of Lego merchandise from the various retail stores and sold hundreds of thousands of dollars of the merchandise on the Internet. Swanberg also stored tens of thousands of dollars of stolen Lego merchandise at his residence in Reno.

A warrant was issued for Mr. Swanberg’s arrest. Upon arrest, he will be brought before a U.S. Magistrate Judge for an initial appearance hearing.

The case is being investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Craig S. Denney.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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