

# St. Clair County Man Charged With Organized Retail Theft Of Tools and Electronics

by Submitted by Illinois Attorney General Raoul's Office  
March 17 2023 2:44 PM



**CHICAGO** – Attorney General Raoul today announced criminal charges against a St. Clair County man over the alleged possession, purchase and sale of purported stolen retail merchandise including tools, electronics and lawn equipment in the estimated amount of \$243,000.00. The charges are the result of a multi-jurisdictional investigation facilitated by Raoul’s [Organized Retail Crime Task Force](#).

Raoul's office charged Garrett R. Bass, 22, of Cahokia Heights, Illinois, with Class 2 felony organized retail crime, punishable by up to 7 years in prison, two counts of Class 1 felony theft, each punishable by up to 15 years in prison, three counts of Class 2 felony theft, each punishable by up to 7 years in prison, and Class 1 felony money laundering, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

"The effects of organized retail crime are not limited to any one region of Illinois, particularly when the sales of stolen merchandise often fund additional criminal activity. Those who knowingly purchase and resell stolen items create a market that encourages retail crime and makes their communities less safe," Raoul said. "Today's charges demonstrate the importance of the collaborative work that my office's Organized Retail Crime Task Force is doing to hold individuals accountable. I would like to thank the Illinois State Police and our law enforcement and retail partners for their help with this investigation."

According to Raoul, Bass knowingly purchased new, in-the-box stolen merchandise. The items, including power tools and electronics, were purportedly stolen from local retailers, and the defendant allegedly purchased them for resale.

The Illinois State Police (ISP) and the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) assisted with the investigation.

"Just as ISP investigates gun and drug trafficking, we investigate those trafficking in stolen goods, and we will continue to work with Attorney General Raoul's office to bring them to justice," said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly.

"Organized retail theft is a complex issue and has been estimated to cost federal and state governments billions of dollars in lost tax revenue," said IDOR Director David Harris. "Attorney General Raoul's Organized Retail Crime Task Force has been instrumental in targeting these crime enterprises, and IDOR has been pleased to help in these efforts."

Attorney General Raoul's [Organized Retail Crime Task Force](#) is the first statewide, public-private collaboration of its kind in Illinois and is designed to foster cooperation among retailers, online marketplaces, law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys dedicated to targeting organized retail crime enterprises. The task force allows the office to utilize data and tips provided by retailers and to partner across jurisdictions with law enforcement agencies to investigate organized retail crimes and trace thefts to the source. Raoul's goal in establishing the task force is to improve communication among public and private entities and utilize a multifaceted approach to combatting organized retail theft and related criminal activity.

In addition to establishing the task force, Attorney General Raoul initiated legislation to create and specifically define organized retail crime in state law. [The new law](#), signed in 2022, puts in place stronger oversight of online marketplaces to curb actors who exploit these legitimate platforms to illegally sell stolen goods. It also creates a statewide intelligence platform to help retailers and law enforcement agencies better coordinate their enforcement efforts. Additionally, the law requires online marketplaces to verify the identity of high-volume sellers, which will help police outlets used to monetize stolen merchandise. The law also aims to reduce a criminal's ability to avoid prosecution for organized retail crime by allowing any state's attorney where any element of organized retail crime takes place to prosecute the whole crime. The new law would also provide the Attorney General's office authority to utilize the statewide grand jury to prosecute organized retail crime. In addition, the Legislature appropriated \$5 million to the Attorney General's office to award grants to state's attorneys' offices and law enforcement agencies that investigate and prosecute organized retail crime.

The public is reminded the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Assistant Attorney General Heidi Epperson is prosecuting the case for Raoul's office.