# Trial continues over the theft of £2.8 million gold toilet from Blenheim Palace



An audacious heist involving a £2.8 million gold toilet, entitled "America," was executed at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, where Sir Winston Churchill was born, according to proceedings at Oxford Crown Court. The theft occurred in the early hours of September 14, 2019, and was carried out by a group of robbers wielding sledgehammers, who smashed their way into the palace and took the fully functioning toilet within a swift five-minute timeframe.

Prosecutor Julian Christopher KC outlined the details of the crime during the ongoing trial. He described the gold toilet, crafted by Italian conceptual artist Maurizio Cattelan, as an unusual artwork, noting its weight of approximately 98 kilograms and its insurance value of $6 million (£4.75 million). At the time of the theft, the intrinsic value of the gold was estimated at around £2.8 million.

The court was informed that Michael Jones, 39, from Oxford, was among those accused of the burglary, having denied the charge of artwork theft. He allegedly conducted reconnaissance at the palace, taking photographs of a window that would later be smashed during the break-in. Photographic evidence suggests that he was on the premises less than a day before the toilet was stolen.

Frederick Sines, 36, also known as Frederick Doe, from Winkfield, Berkshire, and Bora Guccuk, 41, from west London, have been charged with conspiracy to transfer criminal property, both maintaining their innocence. The fourth defendant, James Sheen, 40, from Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, has previously pleaded guilty to the burglary, conspiracy to transfer criminal property, and one count of transferring criminal property.

Christopher explained to the jury that the burglars arrived in two stolen vehicles, which they drove through wooden gates before making their way to the palace steps. After entering through a broken window, they quickly dismantled the toilet from its plumbing, leaving water gushing and causing damage to the historic 18th-century building, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Following the theft, the toilet was never recovered; prosecutors believe that it was split into smaller pieces of gold and disposed of. The defendants are alleged to have engaged in discussions about selling the gold shortly thereafter, with Sheen purportedly communicating with Doe and Guccuk about facilitating sales of the stolen material.

The distinctive toilet had recently been an attraction in an exhibition at Blenheim Palace, where visitors could book appointments to use it as one of the highlights of the display, which opened to the public just two days before the theft. The installation had previously featured at The Guggenheim Museum in New York.

The trial continues at Oxford Crown Court.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/four-men-charged-with-2019-theft-of-6m-gold-toilet-180983226/> - This article corroborates the theft of the gold toilet at Blenheim Palace, including details about the artwork's value and its creator, Maurizio Cattelan. It also mentions the charges against the suspects involved in the heist.
2. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/entertainment/article/prosecutor-says-golden-toilet-was-stolen-from-english-palace-in-audacious-raid> - This article supports the claim that the gold toilet was stolen in an audacious raid from Blenheim Palace and provides information about the value of the gold at the time of the theft.
3. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/blenheim-palace-gold-toilet-heist-b2703731.html> - This article confirms the theft of the gold toilet and mentions that it is believed to have been split up, which aligns with prosecutors' beliefs about its disposal.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-63853334> - Although not directly available in the search results, this URL typically covers news from Oxfordshire and could provide additional details about the trial and the theft at Blenheim Palace.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/sep/16/gold-toilet-stolen-from-blenheim-palace> - This article would likely cover the initial theft of the gold toilet from Blenheim Palace, providing details about the event and its aftermath.
6. <https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/maurizio-cattelan-america> - This URL would provide information about the gold toilet's exhibition at The Guggenheim Museum in New York, where it was first displayed before being moved to Blenheim Palace.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/gold-toilet-stolen-from-blenheim-palace-in-audacious-raid-court-hears-7EPPWFAYBFNIRPGQLMKDWUVQNI/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
8. <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/uk-news/gold-toilet-worth-28m-stolen-31072985> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
9. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/blenheim-palace-winston-churchill-donald-trump-english-london-b2703794.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
10. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/gold-toilet-stolen-from-blenheim-palace-in-audacious-raid-court-hears/a623584045.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
11. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn04xkx43pjo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
12. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14430403/golden-toilet-blenheim-palace-stolen-court-trial.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data