# CCTV footage captures audacious theft of £4.75 million gold toilet from Blenheim Palace



Police have released detailed CCTV footage depicting the audacious theft of an 18-carat-gold toilet worth £4.75 million from Blenheim Palace, an event that occurred in the early hours of Saturday, 14 September 2019. The video evidence, presented at Oxford Crown Court, captures the moment when two stolen vehicles breached the gates of the prestigious Oxfordshire estate, where Sir Winston Churchill was born.

The footage, shown to jurors, reveals how two cars, a stolen Isuzu truck and a VW Polo, sped across the lawn and into the courtyard of Blenheim Palace shortly before 5am. Within mere minutes, members of a five-man gang could be seen breaking through a window using sledgehammers and crowbars. "They knew precisely where to go, broke down the wooden door to the cubicle where the toilet was fully plumbed in, removed it, leaving water pouring out of the pipes, and drove away,” stated prosecutor Julian Christopher KC.

The golden toilet, created by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan and titled "America," was a key attraction in a recently opened exhibition at the palace, drawing attention for its commentary on wealth and excess. The item, weighing 98 kilograms, was fully functional, allowing visitors to use it during the exhibition, which had just commenced on the 12th of September. The artwork had garnered international attention and was notably referenced during the first term of President Donald Trump, when it was suggested to borrow the piece instead of a Vincent van Gogh painting.

Following the heist that lasted approximately five minutes, the gang managed to load the gold toilet and its seat into the back of the VW Polo, causing the car's suspension to sag under the weight, and sped away as security staff attempted to give chase. According to the evidence presented, the toilet has not been recovered since the burglary.

Three individuals are currently on trial in connection with the theft: Michael Jones, 39, from Oxford, who has pleaded not guilty to charges of burglary; Frederick Sines, 36, known as Frederick Doe, from Winkfield, Berkshire; and Bora Guccuk, 41, from west London, both of whom face charges of conspiring to transfer criminal property. The court has been informed that Doe and Guccuk allegedly assisted in selling the stolen gold after the crime. Another alleged accomplice, James Sheen, 40, from Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, has already pleaded guilty to burglary.

Prosecutors have indicated that extensive planning went into the theft, with Jones allegedly conducting reconnaissance visits to Blenheim Palace prior to the crime. Evidence includes a trip he made with his partner on 7 September 2019, just days before the exhibition opened, during which they were recorded on CCTV in the vicinity of the toilet. Further investigation revealed messages exchanged between Jones and Sheen during the lead-up to the burglary.

The defence has contended that the charges against the three men are unsubstantiated, as all have denied the accusations in court. The trial continues, bringing to light the intricate planning and execution behind one of the most notable art thefts in recent history.

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

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/02/25/cattelans-%C2%A348m-gold-toilet-stolen-in-five-minute-raid-and-split-into-smaller-parts-court-hears> - This source details the trial of the suspects involved in the theft, including the planning and execution of the heist. It also mentions that the toilet was split into smaller parts after the theft.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-49455114> - This BBC article provides additional context about the theft, including the reaction of the artist and the police investigation. It highlights the audacity of the crime and the challenges in recovering the stolen artwork.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/sep/14/gold-toilet-stolen-from-blenheim-palace> - This Guardian article covers the immediate aftermath of the theft, including the initial police response and the artist's comments on the incident. It emphasizes the artwork's value and cultural significance.
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/gold-toilet-blenheim-palace-theft-maurizio-cattelan-a9111156.html> - This Independent article discusses the theft's impact on the art world and provides insights into the artist's intentions behind 'America.' It also touches on the potential motives behind the theft.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/09/14/gold-toilet-stolen-blenheim-palace/> - This Telegraph article offers details about the security breach at Blenheim Palace and the subsequent investigation. It highlights the unusual nature of the theft and the challenges faced by authorities in recovering the stolen item.
7. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/cctv-shows-moment-thieves-roll-475-million-gold-toilet-out-of-palace/a1215613030.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
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