# Police extend hold on £26,500 seized in major online stolen goods probe



Asif Ali Mushtaq, from Wembley in London, was arrested in 2021 following a police investigation in Norfolk that uncovered stolen items being sold online. Charged with burglary and handling stolen goods, Mushtaq is now facing further legal action aimed at recovering the proceeds derived from his alleged criminal activities. £26,500 in cash seized during the investigation remains under police control, with the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) having secured a six-month extension to continue holding the funds while ongoing inquiries proceed.

This case is emblematic of a broader problem with stolen goods being circulated through online marketplaces. Notably, victims frequently find their property resold on platforms such as eBay, sometimes with frustratingly slow or ineffective law enforcement responses. An example echoes in Michigan, where a woman named Kelly discovered her stolen camera equipment being offered for sale online by a seller using multiple aliases. After reporting the listing yielded no action, Kelly was compelled to repurchase her own stolen items to reclaim them, highlighting significant challenges for victims trying to recover stolen property in digital spaces.

Retail theft and fraud, with subsequent online sales of stolen items, are far from isolated occurrences. Past incidents have included an Omaha hospital worker who was arrested for stealing surgical supplies and selling them below cost on eBay. Cases like these underscore the difficulty of tracking stolen goods once they enter online marketplaces, complicating recovery efforts for both victims and law enforcement.

Despite their role as one of the largest online marketplaces, platforms such as eBay have faced criticism over how they handle reports of stolen items. Sellers and buyers have expressed frustration over automated responses that dismiss complaints or do not reflect genuine policy enforcement. Such shortcomings in handling stolen goods can erode trust within the community and hamper attempts to curb illicit sales.

Tech-based solutions have been proposed to address this issue, including the use of camera serial numbers embedded in photos to trace items back to their rightful owners. This kind of innovation might offer a more effective way to identify stolen property and prevent it from being traded online, though such initiatives require wider adoption and support.

Buyers concerned about the legitimacy of items are often advised to remain cautious and make use of reporting tools to flag suspicious listings to both the platform and local authorities. However, the process can be cumbersome, and the effectiveness of these measures is still a subject of active discussion among eBay’s user community.

The challenges illuminated by Mushtaq’s arrest and the extended investigation into the criminal proceeds demonstrate that while online marketplaces facilitate widespread commerce, they also present vulnerabilities exploited by criminals. Strengthened law enforcement efforts, enhanced platform policies, and innovative technological measures all appear necessary to better protect victims and uphold the integrity of digital marketplaces.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25269960.proceeds-crime-bid-200k-ebay-stolen-camera-scam/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25269960.proceeds-crime-bid-200k-ebay-stolen-camera-scam/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/hall-of-shame-ebay-shopkeeper-ships-out-stolen-stuff)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.d-ddaily.com/shop/custom.aspx?recid=2067)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://community.ebay.com/t5/Selling/eBay-knowingly-selling-stolen-goods-is-bad-for-community/td-p/34445484)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://community.ebay.com/t5/Selling/Idea-for-making-it-harder-to-sell-stolen-goods/td-p/27328638/page/2)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://community.ebay.com/t5/Buying/Possible-scam-Selling-a-stolen-item/td-p/28335424), [[7]](https://community.ebay.com/t5/Buying/I-think-a-seller-is-trying-to-sell-stolen-property-What-do-I-do/td-p/27351964)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25269960.proceeds-crime-bid-200k-ebay-stolen-camera-scam/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/hall-of-shame-ebay-shopkeeper-ships-out-stolen-stuff), [[4]](https://community.ebay.com/t5/Selling/eBay-knowingly-selling-stolen-goods-is-bad-for-community/td-p/34445484), [[5]](https://community.ebay.com/t5/Selling/Idea-for-making-it-harder-to-sell-stolen-goods/td-p/27328638/page/2)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25269960.proceeds-crime-bid-200k-ebay-stolen-camera-scam/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/hall-of-shame-ebay-shopkeeper-ships-out-stolen-stuff> - A Michigan woman, Kelly, discovered her stolen camera equipment being sold on eBay. The seller, Ali N. Yassine, had multiple aliases and was shipping stolen items from Dearborn, Michigan. Despite reporting the issue, authorities took no action, prompting Kelly to repurchase her own stolen items to retrieve them. This case highlights the challenges in recovering stolen property sold online and the need for more effective law enforcement responses to such crimes.
3. <https://www.d-ddaily.com/shop/custom.aspx?recid=2067> - The ORC (Organized Retail Crime) Archives from 2015 document various incidents of retail theft and fraud. Notably, a hospital employee in Omaha, Nebraska, was arrested for stealing surgical supplies and selling them below cost on eBay. This case underscores the prevalence of stolen goods being sold online and the challenges in tracking and recovering such items.
4. <https://community.ebay.com/t5/Selling/eBay-knowingly-selling-stolen-goods-is-bad-for-community/td-p/34445484> - An eBay seller expressed frustration over the platform's handling of reports concerning stolen goods. Despite reporting a listing, the seller received an automated response stating the item did not violate eBay's policies, highlighting perceived shortcomings in eBay's process for addressing such issues and the broader impact on the community.
5. <https://community.ebay.com/t5/Selling/Idea-for-making-it-harder-to-sell-stolen-goods/td-p/27328638/page/2> - A discussion on eBay's community forum explored ideas to make it more difficult to sell stolen goods on the platform. Suggestions included using camera serial numbers to trace photos back to their original owners, emphasizing the importance of technological solutions in combating the sale of stolen items online.
6. <https://community.ebay.com/t5/Buying/Possible-scam-Selling-a-stolen-item/td-p/28335424> - A forum thread on eBay's community platform discussed concerns about listings selling stolen items. Users shared experiences and advice on identifying and reporting such listings, highlighting the challenges buyers face in ensuring the legitimacy of items purchased online.
7. <https://community.ebay.com/t5/Buying/I-think-a-seller-is-trying-to-sell-stolen-property-What-do-I-do/td-p/27351964> - An eBay community member sought advice on handling a situation where a seller was suspected of selling stolen property. The discussion provided insights into the steps buyers can take, including reporting the issue to eBay and local authorities, to address potential theft and fraud on the platform.