

## **'Bling ring' confession helped break celebrity burglary case**

**Court records show that a suspect charged in eight of the crimes gave police a statement implicating several others in the thefts at the homes of Hollywood's young celebrities.**

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Authorities arrested suspects accused of burglarizing the homes of Paris Hilton, Lindsay Lohan and other young celebrities after a member of the alleged "bling ring" confessed, according to a search warrant affidavit obtained by The Times.

The search warrant said the crew would surf the Internet to find where the celebrities lived, then watched the locations and worked out ways to break into the homes.

In many of the cases, the doors were simply left open. In the case of Hilton and actress Rachel Bilson, the crew broke in numerous times, according to the search warrant affidavit filed at a Las Vegas court.

The ring of predominantly young women who once attended an Agoura Hills high school netted more than \$3 million in merchandise.

An unidentified person initially tipped Los Angeles Police Department detectives that Nicholas Frank Prugo and Rachel Lee were responsible for a burglary at Lohan's Hollywood Hills home early this year, the search warrant states.

Prugo was arrested in connection with burglaries at the homes of Lohan and Audrina Patridge. At first, he did not cooperate with authorities, the warrant states. But on Oct. 6, Prugo, along with his attorney, Sean Erenstoft, met with LAPD detectives to "return some stolen items and report information."

Prugo provided a full confession and implicated Lee and several other suspects: Jonathan Ajar, Courtney Ames, Alexis Neiers, Diana Tamayo and a man he knows only as Roy, according to the affidavit by Det. Craig Dunn of the Las Vegas Police Department.

Las Vegas police were involved because its officers helped the LAPD with two searches in Las Vegas.

Roy Lopez and those named were subsequently arrested and charged in connection with at least one of the 10 burglaries, which occurred from December to September.

Prugo has been charged in eight of the burglaries, prosecutors said. Lee has been arrested, but not charged.

"Prugo admitted to committing all the burglaries and that Rachel Lee was with him during the residential burglaries of Audrina Patridge, Lindsay Lohan, Orlando Bloom, Rachel Bilson and the Hilton family," the affidavit states.

Prugo told detectives that they gained entry into the homes through unlocked doors, with the exception of the Lohan and Hilton residences.

Prugo told detectives that the group used such websites as TMZ.com and celebrity addressaerial.com to learn the location of stars' homes and figure out their travel itinerary, according to the affidavit.

Celebrityaddressaerial .com boasts that users "will be able to see behind the tall hedges, big gates and security systems" and "get unprecedented access to the sort of lifestyle your favorite celebrity can afford."

Once a target was chosen, the group then visited the location and searched for a mode of entry, Prugo told detectives, according to the search warrant. Prugo stated that they entered the Hilton home approximately three times before the December burglary.

According to the court document, the crew removed cash, narcotics and thousands of dollars worth of jewelry.

At Bloom's home, they allegedly stole several expensive watches and artwork, the records state. Prugo later told investigators that a piece of Bloom's artwork was hanging in the bathroom of one of his alleged co-conspirators.

Authorities said the "bling ring" also allegedly broke into Bilson's home three times and, on one occasion, took a television, the search warrant states. Prugo told investigators that he removed as much as \$300,000 worth of Chanel clothing from Bilson's residence.

During the search of the Las Vegas home where Lee lived with her father, detectives turned up items from Hilton, Lohan and Patridge, including three personal photos of Hilton, two pairs of jeans and a white hat, according to another search warrant.