



WINONA VERDICT SCARES OFF HOLLYWOOD'S CELEBRITY SHOPLIFTERS

STICKY-fingered stars, who are used to making off with high-priced goods from some of Hollywood's poshest boutiques and stores, are now keeping their hands in their pockets - thanks to Winona Ryder's conviction on charges of felony grand theft and vandalism.

"The word is out - you will be busted if you steal, even if you are famous," a high-powered Tinseltown insider tells GLOBE. "Celebrities used to be able to keep that type of naughty behavior under wraps - and if caught, they'd simply pay up.

"But no longer. Personalities now know they're vulnerable and are going to be treated just like anyone else."

Some of Hollywood's elite are known to shoplift and - until now - stores have been looking the other way, sources say. The stars include:
● A blonde bombshell, who was the target of lust by millions of American males for her sexy TV roles. Sources say she is well-known by stores' security guards, who regularly watch her walk out with items and then just routinely turn around and bill her management company.

● A one-time heartthrob, who soared to fame in a series of action flicks. Sources say he takes what he wants from two Beverly Hills' boutiques. Until now, insiders say the stores were reluctant to stop him for fear of a celeb backlash against them.

● A beloved '60s TV idol, who has been frequently stopped by stores' security throughout Hollywood. Each time, she blames age-related memory lapses for her failure to pay and security lets her off, sources say.

● A famous comedian, who has a knack for knocking off inexpensive items like Preparation H, toothpaste and deodorant from pharmacies. The funnyman has been nabbed at least once and was released without being charged, a source says.

"But the Winona case now makes it crystal clear: 'Keep your hands to yourself or end up like her,'" the source points out.

Winona, 31, was found guilty of swiping more than \$5,000 worth of



Store surveillance video at Saks (left) catches Winona with her hands full. The guilty actress in court with her lawyer Mark Geragos



merchandise from Saks Fifth Avenue in Beverly Hills. She is scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 6. Prosecutors are not seeking jail time, only probation, community service and restitution to Saks.

Still, "Ms. Ryder's conviction sends a message that it is not OK to steal," John Webb, CEO of a prestigious Beverly Hills law firm, tells GLOBE. "Being convicted of

felony grand theft and vandalism is the ultimate embarrassment for a celebrity - and it sends a message to shoplifting stars to cut it out or they could see their reputation go up in flames."

But Winona, a two-time Oscar nominee, won't necessarily be ruined, predicts Hollywood starmaker Jay Bernstein.

"Once she pays her fines and does her hours of community service, I think her career will get right back on track," Bernstein tells GLOBE. "I think the notoriety will have no long-term negative effects. But now that Winona's been convicted, I'm sure many of the stars who pilfer for fun will stop. It's not a game to get arrested and be tried in a court of law."

Hollywood security expert Bill Schneid tells GLOBE that many notables who steal do so because they're bored. "Celebs get a rush from doing something forbidden and illegal," he explains. "But they are now going to think twice before going on a shoplifting spree."

- ROBIN MIZRAHI