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Marin woman denies guilt in suspected bike theft ring

By

By Gary Klien

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[See a slideshow of the bikes](#)

A Kentfield woman arrested in what investigators described as a major bike theft ring apparently had "exactly one" bike that might have been stolen, and it was probably worth less than \$1,000, her lawyer said Tuesday.

Rebecca Hammett, 48, was arrested last week after investigators executed search warrants at her home and two other sites and seized more than 130 bikes and frames. The sheriff's department is investigating whether Hammett was buying bikes from thieves, fixing them up and reselling them.

The sheriff's department released photos of all the bikes so potential victims could identify and reclaim them. The photos — which can be viewed in a Marin Independent Journal slideshow at <http://bit.ly/TCtNj3> — generated some 200 inquiries in Marin, San Francisco, the East Bay and beyond, investigators said.

But at the courthouse Tuesday, Hammett's lawyer, Deputy Public Defender Michael Coffino, criticized the gallery of bicycle photos. He said the sheriff's investigators "put together a beautiful art installation" but have offered little to no evidence of theft.

Coffino said Hammett collects and refurbishes bicycles. With the exception of one allegedly stolen bike, the rest of the bikes apparently belonged to Hammett, he said.

"There's nothing illegal about having a large collection of bicycles," he said.

Hammett pleaded not guilty to a charge of possessing stolen property. Judge James Chou denied her request to be released on her own recognizance, noting she has several misdemeanor cases pending in addition to the felony bike theft case.

Hammett's bail remains set at \$30,000. She returns to court Aug. 10 for a hearing to decide whether there is sufficient evidence to hold a trial.

The bicycles remain locked in an evidence bay while investigators field claims and check serial numbers,

said sheriff's Lt. Jamie Scardina.

Residents who think they recognize their bikes in the [photo gallery](#) should email sheriff's Deputy Bo Dahlberg at bdahlberg@marinsheriff.org.

They will have to provide a bicycle serial number, or some other unique identifying characteristic such as a sticker or mark, in order to claim the property.

Dahlberg said a public viewing of the property will likely be held later this summer.

The Marin County Sheriff's Office offers a free bike registry to help keep a law enforcement database of bike serial numbers and photos. Residents can register their bikes at www.marinsheriff.org under the "Resources" tab.

URL: <http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20140701/marin-woman-denies-guilt-in-suspected-bike-theft-ring>

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