

### **Locked up for eBay spree**

Regina used online auction to fence stolen goods worth \$600,000

**Kevin O'Connor**

Leader-Post

A Regina man is going to prison after pleading guilty to one of the biggest eBay-related crime sprees ever seen in Canada.

On Wednesday, John William Wasmann, 51, pleaded guilty to possession of a staggering volume of stolen property, including some 9,000 items that had been sold through the Internet auction service.

Provincial Court Judge Diane Morris sentenced him to two years incarceration and ordered him to pay an \$83,000 fine.

According to Crown prosecutor Chris Sabat, between May 8, 2000, and Nov. 23, 2003, Wasmann listed more than 9,000 stolen items on the eBay online auction service. The items sold for a total of \$459,000US (about \$600,000 Cdn).

Among the items were \$90,000 worth of DVDs, \$77,000 worth of computer hardware, \$75,000 of software, \$50,000 of Nintendo GameBoy players, \$25,000 of sports wear and \$15,000 of craft supplies.

The items were sold across the U.S. and Canada.

When police searched Wasmann's Regina home they found about \$188,000 in bonds which he had apparently purchased with his eBay sales. Police also seized about \$13,000 cash and about \$20,000 in property.

Under Morris's order, the seized property has now been forfeited to the Crown.

The scheme unravelled after several pairs of motorcycle gloves were stolen from a Regina store. The owner found one pair up for sale on eBay and called police.

The Regina Police Service's street crimes unit and the Regina Integrated Proceeds of Crime Unit (made up of city police and RCMP) investigated and traced the transactions back to Wasmann.

Wasmann had sold the items under two eBay user names.

Defence lawyer Dan Kwochka said Wasmann is a former high school principal who has struggled since suffering a nervous breakdown a number of years ago.

"He obviously spiralled into something he would, earlier in his life, never have foreseen," Kwochka said.

Court heard that Wasmann sold items taken from such stores as Staples, Home Depot and Peavey Mart.

In some cases, he fenced stolen items for others, but many of the items he shoplifted himself.

Kwochka said he thinks Wasmann engaged in his illegal activities more for the excitement than for the money.

Morris said it was "astounding" how Wasmann had racked up criminal convictions -- including violent offences -- following a distinguished career as a teacher and principal.

"It's quite an amazing story that you have," Morris said. "You were a productive, contributing member of society ... and then something happened."

She said she hoped he would get better.

Wasmann said nothing as he was taken away to begin his sentence.

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