

Police Drop Lego Masking Practice

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. mugshot (noun) /'mʌg.ʃɒt/ - A photo of a person taken by the police when they are arrested.
Example: The police shared the suspect's mugshot on social media.
2. altered (adjective) /'ɔ:l.təd/ - Changed in some way from the original.
Example: The altered photos of suspects used Lego heads.
3. guilt (noun) /gɪlt/ - A feeling or assumption that someone has done something wrong.
Example: Sharing mugshots can give people a sense of guilt.
4. awaiting (verb) /ə'weɪ.tɪŋ/ - Waiting for something to happen.
Example: People awaiting trial may face problems if their mugshot is online.
5. fugitive (noun) /'fju:.dʒə.tɪv/ - A person who is running away, usually from the law.
Example: Police keep the mugshot of a fugitive online for safety reasons.
6. arrestee (noun) /ə'res'ti:/ - A person who has been arrested.
Example: The police shared information about the arrestee's case.
7. legal (adjective) /'li:.gəl/ - Relating to the law or allowed by law.
Example: The department follows legal guidelines when sharing photos.



Lego, a toy company, has asked a California police department to stop using Lego heads to hide the faces of suspects in pictures shared online. The Murrieta Police Department has been using Lego heads and emojis on social media since early 2023. This practice follows a California law from January 1 that restricts departments from sharing **mugshots** on social media. However, the department's **altered** photos gained attention recently, causing news articles and the request from Lego.

In the United States, police departments often share photos for "Mugshot Mondays" or "Wanted Wednesdays" on social media to involve the community. But experts warn that putting such images online can harm those pictured. Mugshots can suggest **guilt** for people **awaiting** trial, and they can make it difficult for people with a criminal record to find jobs. These images may continue to impact people's lives negatively.

California's new law requires police to remove booking photos from social media within 14 days, except in special cases. This applies even to photos of people arrested for violent crimes unless they remain **fugitives** or threats to public safety. The law is meant to protect people's privacy and limit negative consequences from mugshots being shared online.

The Murrieta Police Department reviewed its policy on sharing photos of **arrestees** and announced a new approach on Instagram in January 2023. People wanted more "Weekly Roundup" posts, so the department started using Lego heads and emojis to follow the law and keep residents engaged.

However, after Lego's request, the department agreed not to use its products in their online content. They are now exploring other options to create engaging and interesting posts for their followers while staying within the **legal** guidelines.

DISCUSSION

1. What are some other creative ways the police department can cover faces in photos instead of using Lego heads or emojis?
2. How do you think a "Weekly Roundup" post helps keep the community engaged and informed?
3. Why might sharing mugshots on social media cause harm to the people in the photos?
4. How do you think the police department can find a balance between keeping the community informed and protecting people's privacy?
5. If you were the head of a police department, what other fun symbols might you use to cover suspects' faces in photos?
6. How do you think social media has changed the way police departments interact with the community?
7. Do you think the police should continue to share photos on social media? Why or why not?