



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Stanislaus County

832 12th Street, Suite 300
Modesto, CA 95354

Mailing: P. O. Box 442, Modesto, CA 95353
Phone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 525-5545

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Carol Shipley
Assistant District Attorney

Chief Deputy District Attorneys

Jerry Begen

Alan Cassidy

Dave Harris

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: October 20, 2009

Assistant district Attorney

Re: Joseph Michael Black

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Auto thief sentenced to 2 years, 4 months prison

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Joseph Michael Black, age 34, of Turlock, was convicted of auto theft, evading a peace officer, and resisting arrest. Black also admitted serving a prior prison term stemming from an October 2008 conviction for evading a peace officer for which he was on parole. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On June 29, 2009 at around 4:00 p.m. in the parking lot of SaveMart on Lander Avenue in Turlock, officers from the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (STANCATT) observed Black driving a 2006 maroon Chevy Blazer. It had been reported stolen out of Turlock on June 28, 2009. The owner had parked the vehicle in his garage with the keys in the ignition. However, the owner had forgotten to close the garage door before going to sleep.

When officers attempted to perform a routine traffic stop, Black accelerated away at over 70 m.p.h. and failed to stop at the stop signs and traffic signals at Walnut Avenue, West Main Street, Lizzie Street, Highway 99 on ramp, Hatch Road, and River Road. Black then led the officers to the front of the Modesto Police Department where Black stopped his vehicle and surrendered to the pursuing officers. Black claimed that his friend gave him the vehicle, but he had no contact information for this friend.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Scott Steffen sentenced Black to two years and four months in state prison.

The District Attorney's Office urges citizens to remove the keys to their unattended vehicles even while parked in their own garage.

Stanislaus County residents can report suspected vehicle theft activity to their local law enforcement agency or contact the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (STANCATT) at: (209) 545-7316.

IF YOU OBSERVE A THEFT IN PROGRESS, DIAL 911

###