



OFFICE OF THE
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: March 2, 2009

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Jimmy Espinoza, Jr. -

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Auto Thief Sentenced to 2 years Prison

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Jimmy Espinoza, age 28, of Modesto, was convicted of two counts of auto theft, misdemeanor evading a peace officer, and misdemeanor hit and run. The defendant is currently on probation for auto theft from an April 2007 conviction. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

The case arose out of events which occurred over two days. On January 25, 2009 at around 1:00 p.m. in the area of Vera Cruz Drive in Modesto, Espinoza took his sister's friend's 1996 Ford Taurus that had been left running while the victim was retrieving items from the trunk for Espinoza's sister. The next day, on January 26, 2009, Espinoza stole a 2003 black Ford F-250 pick-up truck out of a separate victim's front yard in Riverbank when that owner left the truck on, but unattended to warm up the engine. When a Modesto Police officer initiated his lights and siren to perform a traffic stop in the area of Oakdale Road and Floyd Avenue, Espinoza kept driving. After a few blocks, Espinoza crashed into a fire hydrant.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Donald Shaver sentenced Espinoza to two years in state prison. This is the defendant's first prison commitment.

The District Attorney's Office urges citizens to not leave their vehicle on while unattended.

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

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