



OFFICE OF THE
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: September 14, 2011

Re: William James Costa
Auto Thief Gets
10 Years Prison

Contact: Carol Shipley

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that William James Costa, age 49, of Modesto, was convicted on September 9, 2011 of auto theft. Costa also admitted a prior conviction from June 1982 for robbery, a strike under California’s “Three Strikes” Law. Costa has a prior auto theft conviction from January 1989. After being released from prison, Costa was sent back on four separate possession of methamphetamine convictions from 1990, 1992, 1997, and 2002. Costa is currently on probation for domestic violence from March 2007. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On January 14, 2011 in the area of Mono Drive and Kerr Avenue in Modesto, an officer from the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (StanCATT) observed Costa drive a 1998 white Toyota 4 Runner that had been reported stolen the day before from the owner’s driveway on Edgebrook Drive in Modesto. Costa parked the SUV after he drove it a few blocks. The officer then contacted Costa as he was walking away from the vehicle. Costa claimed that he bought the SUV for \$150 from a person named “Bumper.” Costa had no contact information for “Bumper,” nor any proof of registration or insurance. Costa said he “believed the vehicle may be stolen” due to “Bumper” selling him the vehicle for such a low price.

The Honorable Marie Silveira sentenced Costa to ten years in state prison.

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