



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: March 24, 2010

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Leonel Jimenez
Auto Thief Sentenced to
Four Years, Eight Months in Prison

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Leonel Jimenez, age 29, of Livingston, was convicted on March 24, 2010 of auto theft, evading a peace officer and resisting arrest. Jimenez also admitted having served two prior prison terms stemming from an August 2004 conviction for possession of methamphetamine and a May 2002 conviction for possession for sale of methamphetamine. Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey W. Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On July 30, 2009 at around 6:30 a.m. on northbound Highway 99 by the Turlock rest area, a CHP officer observed a 2001 gray Honda Accord traveling in excess of 85 miles per hour. When the officer initiated his lights and siren to perform a routine traffic stop, Jimenez accelerated away at over 110 m.p.h. and exited the freeway at the Lander Avenue exit where he also failed to stop at the red traffic signal. Jimenez then hit a raised curb before crashing into a chain link fence. Jimenez then jumped out of the car and ran, but was caught a short distance away hiding behind a bush. Jimenez claimed that the car belonged to his girlfriend.

The owner stated that Jimenez is a family friend and had been staying at the owner's home in Livingston. The night before, the owner had parked her vehicle unlocked in her garage with the keys in the ignition.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Timothy Salter sentenced Jimenez to four years and eight months in state prison.

The District Attorney's Office urges citizens to remove the keys to their unattended vehicles even if parked inside their garages.

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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