



OFFICE OF THE
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: April 13, 2011

Re: Steven Lee Morris

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**Auto Thief Gets
6 Years Prison**

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Steven Lee Morris, age 29, of Merced, was convicted on April 13, 2011 of auto theft. Morris also admitted prior convictions for auto theft in December 2004 and residential burglary in October 1999, a “strike” under California’s “Three Strikes” law. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On March 12, 2010 at approximately 1:30 a.m. in the area of Mitchell Road and Hatch Road in Ceres, an officer noticed a 2002 grey Hyundai Accent being driven with its high beams on. A check of the license plate revealed that the vehicle had been reported stolen out of Merced. When the officer initiated a routine traffic stop, Morris accelerated away. Eventually, Morris hit a curb and stopped the car. After his arrest, Morris claimed that the owner allowed him to use the car. When the officer questioned Morris about the punched ignition, Morris stated he had nothing else to say. Morris then stated, “I did five years in Susanville State Prison in California for Grand Theft Auto. How stupid would I be to steal another car.” The officer then contacted the registered owner who was adamant that Morris did not have permission to take her vehicle and that she still had every key to the vehicle with her.

The Honorable Thomas Zeff sentenced Morris to six 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

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