



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: August 6, 2004

Re: **Police impersonation charged**

For more information contact:

John J. Goold, Chief Deputy D.A.

(209) 525-5550

MODESTO, CALIFORNIA – Stanislaus County District Attorney James Brazelton announced today that Scott H. Bernstein, age 46, of Wesley Hills, New York, was charged in a criminal complaint with five felony counts of Impersonating a peace officer by using a badge resembling that of a peace officer, four misdemeanor counts of fraudulent use of a badge, one misdemeanor count of fraudulently using identification, and one misdemeanor count of simulating an official inquiry.

The criminal complaint alleges that during the end of June and the first part of July 2004, Bernstein, a private investigator from the State of New York, traveled to the Modesto area to conduct an investigation regarding the Scott Peterson homicide case. The complaint alleges that during this investigation Bernstein represented to various people that he was a police officer, and that he displayed an official looking badge during these contacts. It is a violation of both New York law and California law for Private Investigators to use badges in the course of their duties.

Bernstein is believed to have appeared on the Catherine Crier Television show, which airs on Court TV. During these appearances Bernstein discussed the information he obtained while in Modesto and displayed several booking photos that were apparently obtained from the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office.

The Stanislaus District Attorney's Office requests that if anybody was contacted by Scott Bernstein during this time period to please contact Lieutenant Mark Smith at 209-525-5550.

The public is also reminded that anytime they are contacted in a non-emergency situation by someone who is not in uniform and claiming to be a peace officer, they are fully within their rights to verify that person is truly a peace officer by asking to see their departmental issued photo identification.