



OFFICE OF THE
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: September 9, 2009

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Shawn O'Neal Hepstall

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Auto Thief Sentenced to 3 Years Prison

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Shawn O'Neal Hepstall, age 22, of Modesto, was convicted of possession of a dangerous weapon, auto theft, and possession of marijuana in the jail. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

The case arose out of events that occurred over three dates: On July 10, 2009 at approximately 8:30 p.m. in the area of El Vista Avenue and Encina Avenue in Modesto, an officer made a routine traffic stop after observing Hepstall driving while holding a cell phone up to his ear. The officer discovered that Hepstall did not have a driver's license and arrested him. A search incident to arrest revealed two double edged throwing knives concealed in Hepstall's right pocket. After being booked into jail, Hepstall posted bail and was released from jail.

On July 23, 2009 at approximately 7:00 a.m., officers were dispatched to a disturbance at an apartment complex on 2nd Street in Ceres where they located Hepstall in possession of a 1998 green Ford Ranger that had been reported stolen seven hours earlier in Modesto.

On August 11, 2009 at approximately 8:00 a.m., custodial deputies discovered 3.29 grams of marijuana in Hepstall's possession while he was in custody at the Honor Farm.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Nancy Ashley sentenced Hepstall to three years in the California Rehabilitation Center.

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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