



OFFICE OF THE
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: April 13, 2011

Re: Eric Von Bernal

Contact: Carol Shipley

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**Auto Thief
Gets 5 Years**

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Eric Von Bernal, age 46, of Modesto, was convicted on April 13, 2011 of auto theft. Bernal also admitted prior convictions for auto theft in November 2000 and possession of stolen property in May 2008 for which he served separate terms of imprisonment. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On December 17, 2010 at approximately 5:30 p.m. in the area of Roseburg Avenue in Modesto, an undercover officer from the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (StanCATT) observed Bernal enter a 2000 grey Dodge Stratus and drive off. The car had been reported stolen five days earlier out of the victim's driveway on Lincoln Avenue in Modesto. When the undercover officer activated his red lights and siren, Bernal accelerated away. After about five miles, Bernal stopped the vehicle. After his arrest, Bernal claimed that a friend gave him the car, but Bernal had no contact information for this friend.

The Honorable Dawna Frenchie Reeves sentenced Bernal to five 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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