

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

DEFENDANT SENTENCED IN CHOP SHOP OPERATION AND POSSESSION OF METHAMPHETAMINE WITH A FIREARM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced that Jesus Perez, age 23, of Salinas, was sentenced today by Judge Julie Culver to 5 years state prison on charges of operating a chop shop in Salinas and possession of methamphetamine with a gun. A chop shop is any location where a person is engaged in altering, destroying, disassembling, or storing a motor vehicle known to have been obtained illegally in order to sell or dispose of the parts or to otherwise alter, deface or destroy vehicle identification information.

On March 23, 2016, a citizen in Salinas observed his truck being stolen from his residence. After calling 911, the citizen followed his truck to a residential location in Salinas. CHP officers arrived on scene and discovered the victim's stolen truck hidden under a tarp and numerous cars parts strewn on the property. Members of the CHP, the Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's Office investigative staff ultimately located six stolen cars in process of being disassembled. They subsequently discovered Perez living in a detached garage on the property. They also located numerous burglary tools and components from the stolen cars in the garage near sleeping quarters used by Perez.

On December 21, 2015 Salinas police officers were dispatched to the Super 8 Motel regarding an unresponsive male. There they found Perez lethargic and lying on the floor of a motel room. Officers located methamphetamine in the room and a loaded .22 caliber handgun in Perez' pant pocket.

Chop Shops are not uncommon in Monterey County. The District Attorney's Office-Economic Vehicle Theft Unit works in conjunction with the Monterey County Sheriff's Department Multi-Agency Detail for Commercial Auto Theft (MADCAT) in locating chop shops throughout the County. Members of the public having information about possible chop shops are encouraged to report what they know to MCSO Detective Arras Wilson at 831-755-7279, CHP Investigator Chuck Rodriguez at 755-3818, DA Investigator Maribel Torres-Hart at 831-883-7588 or District Attorney's Office Fraud Hotline at 831-755-3224.

This case was investigated by MCSO Detective Aras Wilson, CHP Investigator Chuck Rodriguez, Officer William Milward, DAI Mariel Torres-Hart and SPD Officers Joshua Lynd and E. Gamboa.