



Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

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News Release

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Property Crimes Detectives Catch Man Who Ripped Off Flood Victim

Property crimes detectives with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office have arrested 26 year old Victor Gastellum of Fresno. He has been booked into the Fresno County Jail on felony charges of burglary, possession of gun by a felon and grand theft. His bail has been set at \$260,000.

On January 10th, a canal flooded in the area of E. Ramona and N. Locan Avenues in Fresno. The rushing water forced one homeowner to move his valuables out of the house and into storage containers on his property. Days later, the homeowner discovered that someone had broken into both storage containers and stole a safe holding guns and cash. The homeowner reported the theft to the Fresno County Sheriff's Office.

On January 15th, detectives responded and began an investigation. A neighbor contacted one of the detectives at the scene and told them their surveillance cameras recorded video a car which they believed might be related to the theft. The detective watched the video and recognized it as the same car he had recently taken a report on as being a suspicious vehicle in the neighborhood. The detective reviewed his notes and tracked the car to Victor Gastellum, a man who happened to have several outstanding warrants.

On January 18th, detectives went to a home near N. Palm and E. Floradora Avenue in Fresno and found Gastellum. As detectives contacted him,

Gastellum resisted arrest and was found to be armed with a handgun. They were able to take him into custody. During an interview, Gastellum admitted to breaking into the storage containers and stealing a safe. Unfortunately, he no longer had any of the items he took.

Additionally, detectives contacted Gastellum's girlfriend at the home. They arrested 25 year old Maria Baltazar on felony charges not related to the burglary. She is in jail for probation violation and other misdemeanor charges.

Anyone with additional information on the suspects involved in this case is asked to contact Sheriff's Dispatch at (559) 600-3111 or Crime Stoppers at (559) 498-7867. You will remain anonymous and may be eligible for a cash reward.