



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: February 2, 2010

Contact: Jonathan Raven, Assistant Chief Deputy DA
(530) 666-8092

Woodland Couple Convicted For Burglary of Holy Rosary Church

(Woodland, CA) – February 2, 2010 - District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that, on February 1, 2010, Woodland couple Jose and Eleanor Rangel pled guilty to felony theft charges. Mr. Rangel's used a cutting torch to break into a safe at the Holy Rosary Church and, on a different occasion, an ATM kiosk. Mrs. Rangel's possessed stolen property from a different burglary.

On November 26, 2007, Holy Rosary Church officials reported that the safe in the sacristy area had been cut open and thousands of dollars in checks and cash taken. Woodland Police Department Detective Dallas Hyde determined that all evidence pointed to Church handyman Jose Rangel. The Church fired Mr. Rangel in 2003 for suspected theft of donations and other items. Detective Hyde uncovered similar theft activity relating to a second employer. After being fired from Holy Rosary, he was caught lurking in locked areas of the Church claiming that he still worked there. Hyde also discovered that Rangel attempted to copy a master key for the church while claiming it was for his own house.

The burglary was accomplished using a homemade ladder, which was used to enter a small, high window. According to witnesses, only someone familiar with the Church would have used that window as a point of entry. Video surveillance from nearby businesses showed a truck carrying the ladder in the area of the church at the time of the burglary. The truck's model, color and other distinct markings matched that of a truck owned by Rangel. While Eleanor Rangel claimed she did not recognize the truck, she told witnesses that she knew the truck belonged to her husband. Mr. Rangel also denied involvement in the burglary, but claimed he had a condition that caused him to forget large instances of time. During a search of the Rangel home, Detective Hyde found illegally possessed firearms and an acetylene torch "rig" that Rangel had borrowed a week before the burglary. Hyde also found evidence that the Rangels had recently purchased an expensive amphibious vehicle for cash. Other evidence showed the Rangels in financial trouble.

The plea in this case represents Mr. Rangel's second and third convictions for using a cutting torch to steal, explained DDA Couzens. In addition to the count related to the Church, Mr. Rangel pled to a second count of "safecracking" for cutting into an ATM kiosk in Woodland with a torch in October of 2008. In 2009, Mr. Rangel also used a torch to cut into an ATM in Roseville. The pleas to the two Yolo County safecracking charges resolve a number of additional crimes charged against Mr. Rangel including the burglary of a neighbor's house for thousands of dollars in tools, setting fire to two cars belonging to former co-workers, and the burglary laptop computer from a local business. Eleanor Rangel was found in possession of that stolen laptop and she attempted to bribe the store owner to cover up the crime. Mrs. Rangel pled to the felony charge of possessing stolen property.

District Attorney Jeff Reisig credited the persistence of law enforcement for the convictions: "Detective Hyde made the right connections by chasing the right leads," said Reisig. "The Rangels will be held accountable for their crimes against the community." Sentencing for both Jose and Eleanor Rangel will be held on March 3, 2010 at the Yolo County Superior Court.

###