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**GANG MEMBER GIVEN 10 YEARS FOR WEST DAVIS CAR THEFTS**

(Woodland, CA) – District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that Braulio Antonio Gonzalez, aka “Thumper,” an admitted Sureno gang member from Vallejo, was convicted of three counts of stealing a car and an enhancement for criminal street gang activity and was sentenced to ten years in prison. An accomplice, Akasha Malik, aka “Clowny,” another Vallejo Sureno gang member, was convicted of possessing a stolen car with the same gang enhancement and was sentenced to five years in prison. A third accomplice, Damien Castaneda, failed to appear at a court date and remains at large.

The convictions arise from a series of car thefts and burglaries and a high speed chase that ran from West Davis to Vallejo in the early morning of September 1, 2009. Davis police officers had responded to a report that three men were caught breaking into a car in a West Davis suburb then fled in a Mini-Cooper. Later, Davis Police Officer Ryan Bellamy was able to spot the three men driving nearby although they had switched cars and were now driving a Honda. When Bellamy attempted to stop the car a chase ensued from West Davis back to Vallejo at speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour. The chase ended when the car crashed and the men were arrested after a short foot chase.

From the Honda, which was stolen, Officer Bellamy and others were able to recover stolen items from at least three additional car burglaries. Evidence gathered by the Davis Police Department ultimately showed that the three men stole a car from the Vallejo area just before midnight, drove it to West Davis to commit the additional car burglaries, stole a second car, a Mini-Cooper that they later abandoned for a third stolen car, the Honda. All of the thefts took place in the space of approximately two hours.

Judge Timothy Fall pronounced sentence immediately after Gonzalez’s and Malik’s convictions on Friday. Both sentences were enhanced by the fact that both men admitted that the activities were carried out in furtherance of criminal street gang activity; both men are active members of the “Brown Crowd Locos,” a “subset” of the Sureno criminal street gang based in Vallejo. Gonzalez’s sentence was further enhanced by the fact that he had previously been convicted of auto theft.

District Attorney Jeff Reisig commented, “This case is proof that, even in the best of neighborhoods, the threat of gang activity can come from outside the area. It was good to see that the Davis Police Department and the Yolo County Gang Task Force were prepared to respond.”

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