



DenverDA

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NEWS RELEASE

December 23, 2008

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GRAND JURY INDICTS 7 IN CAR THEFT RING

A Denver Grand Jury has returned a 25-count indictment against 7 people accused of engaging in an ongoing, illegal enterprise dating back to 2005 in which they stole money and committed insurance fraud by stealing cars. The indictment is the result of months of outstanding work by the Denver Police Department, the Lakewood Police Department, the Broomfield Police Department and the National Insurance Crime Bureau.

The indictment charges the alleged ringleader, **Jeffrey Earle Piper** (dob: 08-17-64) with violating the Colorado Organized Crime Control Act (COCCA) (F2), 5 counts of aggravated motor vehicle theft (F3), 11 counts of theft by receiving, (F3), 2 counts of theft (F3), conspiracy to commit theft by receiving (F4), conspiracy to commit theft (F4), conspiracy to commit aggravated motor vehicle theft (F4) and identity theft (F4).

Six other co-defendants are charged with similar crimes:

- **Stephanie Jimenez** (dob: 06-30-67): COCCA (F2), conspiracy to commit theft, theft by receiving and aggravated motor vehicle theft (F4) and 3 counts of aggravated motor vehicle theft (F3)
- **Jeremy Lawhon** (dob: 03-10-74): possession of a controlled substance (F6)
- **Tracy Rudisel** (dob: 08-12-66): conspiracy to commit theft, theft by receiving and aggravated motor vehicle theft (F4) and theft (F3)
- **Michael Smajd** (dob: 03-11-65): conspiracy to commit theft, theft by receiving and aggravated motor vehicle theft (F4) and possession of a controlled substance (F6)
- **William Stack** (dob: 03-12-57): conspiracy to commit theft, theft by receiving and aggravated motor vehicle theft (F4), theft by receiving (F3) and aggravated motor vehicle theft (F3)
- **Michelle Winkler** (dob: 06-17-66): conspiracy to commit aggravated motor vehicle theft (F4) and aggravated motor vehicle theft (F3)

The indictment alleges members of the group would rent an expensive car, report it stolen, change the VIN then sell it to another accomplice. The indictment further alleges that the accomplice would insure the car and report it as stolen again to get the insurance money. (One of the stolen cars once belonged to Steve McQueen - a 1959 Cadillac convertible valued at \$133,320.00 - and was featured in the MacGyver TV series.) The estimated loss to individuals, insurance companies and car rental agencies is more than \$700,000.

Piper and Jimenez remain in custody; Rudisel and Stack were released on bond; Lawhon, Smajd and Winkler remain at large.

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The filing of a criminal charge is merely a formal accusation that an individual(s) committed a crime(s) under Colorado laws. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. See Colo. RPC 3.6