



SAN MATEO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE A TRADITION OF SERVICE SINCE 1856

NEWS RELEASE

Incident Date: August 15, 2020
Location: Various locations throughout San Mateo County, San Francisco, San Joaquin County
Type of Crimes: 182(a)(1) PC - Conspiracy to Commit (felony)- Multiple Counts
Suspects: See Attachment

Summary:

Beginning in July 2020, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Administrative Classification Unit and the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office have jointly investigated a large-scale Pandemic Unemployment Assistance fraud ring operating out of the San Mateo County Maguire Correctional Facility. Working with a criminal investigator for the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD), San Mateo County Investigators uncovered fraudulent unemployment claims that have been filed utilizing thirty different inmate's names resulting in over \$250,000 in fraudulent payments. Proactive investigators overheard inmates conversing about these fraudulent claims which initiated the investigation.

Investigators have identified twenty-one people responsible for sixteen of the fraudulent claims, which were filed between June 9, 2020 through July 30, 2020, and exceeded \$250,000 in unlawful payments.

On August 15, 2020, in collaboration with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Gang Task Force and Narcotics Task Force, Redwood City Police Department, San Francisco Police Department, San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office served multiple arrest and search warrants in three counties for people who were not in custody at the Maguire Correctional Facility or California Department of Corrections, but were participating in the EDD fraud. While executing those search warrants, \$150,000 cash was recovered, and the other fraudulent payment activity is still under investigation.

This is the first type of fraudulent ring we have had involving inmates at our facility and we have been in contact with representatives from the EDD to ensure there are no further fraudulent claims being filed using inmate information. Inmates who are currently in custody at the Maguire Correctional Facility and participated in the EDD fraud were rebooked on the new charges. We are grateful to have caught this scheme when we did and that our personnel are so proactive.

We have forwarded this investigation to the District Attorney's Office. Please refer to them for any follow up questions.

Released: August 15, 2020

